

ED PEOPLE *of the* WOODED COUNTRY

Therese O. Deming
Edwin W. Deming

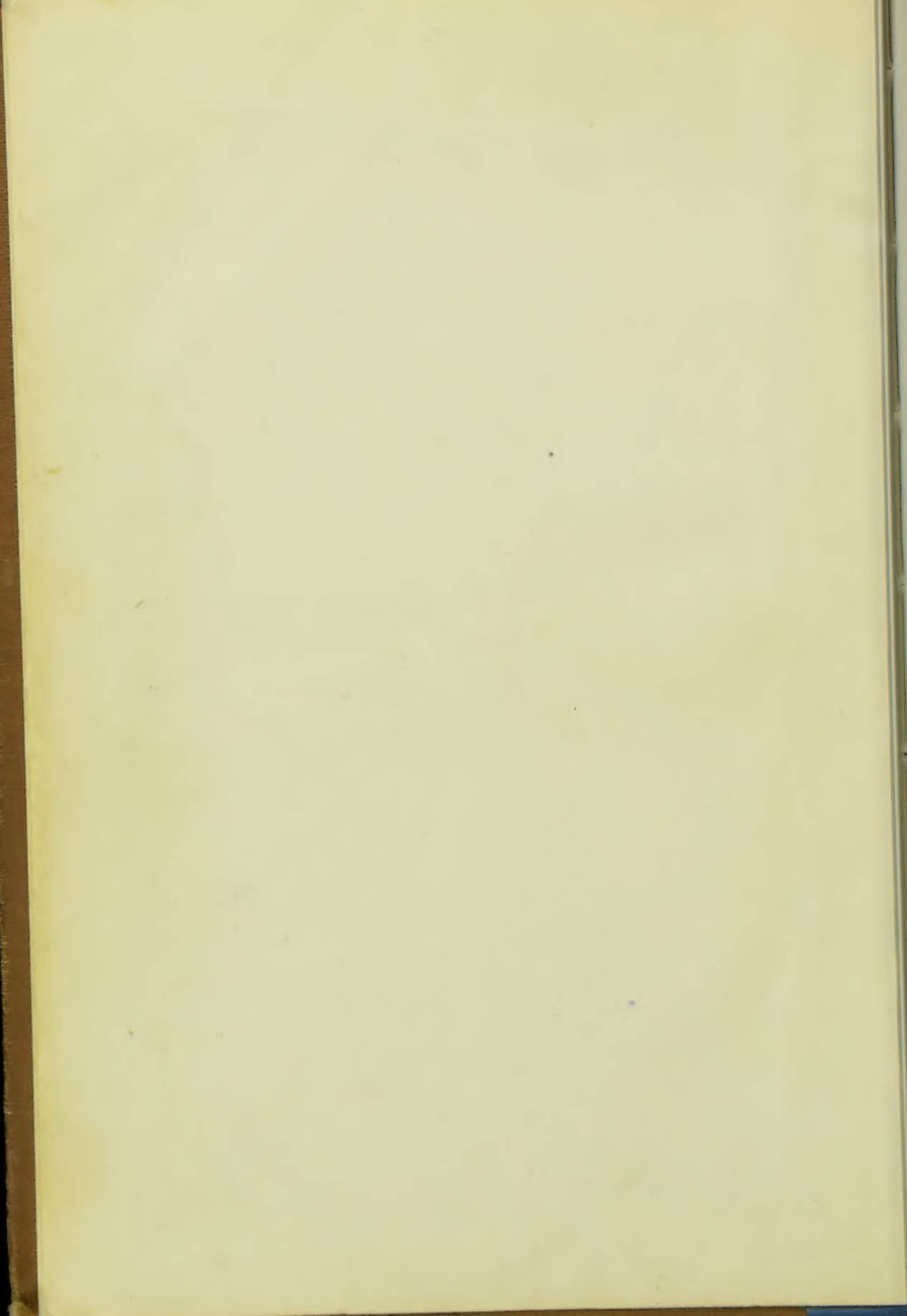


DIAN LIFE SERIES



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RED PEOPLE of the WOODED COUNTRY

A Story of Indian Life

by

Therese O. Deming

Illustrated by

Edwin W. Deming



Edited by Milo B. Hillegas

Professor of Education, Teachers College
Columbia University



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INTRODUCTION

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H AVING lived among Indians in various parts of the country for many years, Therese O. Deming is in a position to write authoritatively on Indian life. In this INDIAN LIFE SERIES she has contributed a truthful picture of everyday family-life as she observed it within the home and the Indian community. Mrs. Deming has an unusual understanding of the real nature of the red man, and this is shown in the way she has interpreted the true spirit and atmosphere of Indian life. The episodes in the books of this series are based on notes entered in her diary while she was living among the Indians.

Each book in this series pictures the dominant traits of one of the three great types of Indians. LITTLE EAGLE very simply introduces the first-grade reader to Indian life through the experiences of an Indian baby and his first childhood days. THE INDIANS IN WINTER CAMP, which is written simply enough for second-grade children to read, tells of the experiences of a slightly older boy who lived on the plains in a skin tepee. RED PEOPLE OF THE WOODED COUNTRY is a story of the adventures of two little Indian boys whose homes were birch-bark wigwams in the woodlands. It can be read with ease by third-grade children, but, like the other books of this series, it will also be read with interest and profit by the children of higher grades. The fourth book is about the little red boys and girls who lived in pueblos in the sunshine of the Southwest. The early methods of travel, the mystical religion, and the cultural traits presented in these books are essentially those used by the Indians at the time of the coming of the white man. 7

These stories have been prepared under the direction and supervision of Professor Milo B. Hillegas of Columbia University.

The illustrations are from water-color paintings by Edwin W. Deming, who in his boyhood determined that his life objective should be to record in pictures the old-time life and customs of the American Indians. Mr. Deming also has lived for many years among various tribes of Indians and was adopted into the Black-foot tribe. His paintings of Indian life have made him famous as an artist.

The readers of the INDIAN LIFE SERIES will acquire from these stories a knowledge of Indian customs, traditions, religion, and culture, and a better understanding of the people whom the European explorers found in North America.

THE PUBLISHERS.

MONTHS OF THE YEAR

Moon of Cracking Trees	January
Moon of Deep Snow	February
Moon of Snowblindness	March
Moon of Summer's Return	April
Moon of Flowers	May
Moon of Strawberries	June
Moon of Ripe Berries	July
Harvest Moon	August
Moon of Falling Leaves	September
Moon of Dry Grass	October
Moon of First Snow	November
Winter Moon	December

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Otter and his father saw a flock of geese.

THE PROMISE OF SPRING

Many, many snows ago a small band of Indians were camped in the woodlands near a river. They were hungry and cold. North Wind had not kept his promise. Not once during the cold moons had he let South Wind send his warm breath to encourage the Indians.

The story-teller told the children about the promise of North Wind. "My grandfather told me the story," he said, "and I shall tell it to you.

"Once, longer ago than anyone can remember, there was a great war between the winds. North Wind tried to drive South Wind home before the Moon of Dried Leaves. North Wind tried to freeze the crops, too. South Wind became very angry, and the Thunder People came to his aid. Together they drove North Wind away. Then they held a council. Because North Wind had lost the battle, they made him promise that South Wind could sometimes send his warm

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breath to encourage the red people during the cold moons."

The Indians did not know about years and months as the white people do. The red people knew about the moon. They could see it grow larger and smaller. So they counted their months from moon to moon.

Each moon had a name. It was named for a special thing that happened during that moon. In January winter held the woods in such an icy grip that even on the quietest nights the trees made cracking sounds. The Indians called that time the Moon of Cracking Trees.

The Moon of Cracking Trees, the coldest moon, had passed. The Moon of Deep Snow had come. Mother Earth was covered with a thick blanket of snow. It seemed like a friendly blanket, but it warned the animal people when their enemy, man, walked over it on his hunt for food. The Indians could not find the animals.

The woods Indians lost courage. The people were hungry and cold. The Blue Spirits of the

North, as the red people called their winters, were being very cruel. The Indians prayed for South, East, and West Wind to start war against North Wind and punish him for breaking his promise. The red people were glad the Moon of Deep Snow was almost over. They hoped the Moon of Snow-blindness would be more friendly.

An Indian father, mother, and their boy, Otter, were camped with this band of woods Indians. The father called Otter to him.

"Come, my boy," he said. "The sun has been kind for several days. Let us go out and see if the animal people are moving about to-day."

Otter and his father went down to the frozen river. They took their bows and arrows with them, hoping to get meat for their evening meal.

The mother stayed at home. She sat by a tiny fire in the wigwam. She kept the fire burning but used only a very little wood. She could not find much wood. The deep snow had hidden it.

"The sun is warm to-day," said the father as he and Otter stood on the bank of the river.

"The Moon of Deep Snow will soon be over. Then it will sleep again for many moons."

"Listen!" said Otter. "Do you hear? I think Father Sun is trying to free the waters of the river."

Otter ran down the bank and put his ear close to the ice that had silenced the voice of the water. He could hear the bell-like tinkle of the water as it coaxed the ice to let it run slowly along.

The father was watching some shadows play hide-and-seek in the sunny patches on the ground. He knew what they meant!

"Look up, Otter," he said.

They both looked up and saw a flock of geese flying north.

"They are looking for open water so that they can alight," said the father. "They bring the promise of a new year. We will not be hungry much longer."

The arrival of the geese brought joy to the father. Otter, too, knew that they brought the promise of new life to the red people. He ran

home to tell his mother what he and his father had seen. On the way he thought, "Perhaps I can catch some fish."

It made the mother happy to know that the hungry time would soon be over. She gave Otter his bone fishhook and his fishline. She also gave him his father's stone ax.

Otter ran back to the river as fast as he could go. His father chopped a hole in the ice. That took a long time, for the ice was very thick. It seemed good to see the water hunting its way under the ice even though it was only a little stream.

Otter knelt on the ice at the edge of the hole. He fished for a long time, but the little stream of water was so shallow that the fish had not yet tried to go upstream to new feeding grounds.

Otter did not catch a fish to take to his mother, but that did not make him sorry. He was happy because he knew that, at last, good old Father Sun was driving the cruel spirits of the cold moons back to their home in the North.



Otter's father chopped a hole through the ice.

That night Otter and his father thanked the Good Spirits for what they had seen. Otter and his father were very happy when they went to their beds of furs. Now they were sure that the Good Spirits had not forgotten the Indian people.

The next morning Otter's father called him very early.

"Come, Otter," he said. "We shall walk to the woods to-day. Let us go out to see if the maple trees are awakening."

It was a long walk to where the maple trees lived, but Otter did not mind that. He was eager to know if Father Sun had told the maples that he was getting ready to welcome the White Spirits from the South. The Indians called their summers, or warm moons, White Spirits. The White Spirits would help the cold and hungry red people.

Otter's father tapped a tree with his stone ax. He made only a little cut. Then the father and Otter waited for a long time. As they waited, they saw a thin gray wolf steal like a shadow into the woods.

"See, Otter," said the father. "The wolf is hungry, too. He is hunting."

At last a tiny drop of sap found its way out of the opening in the maple tree. Otter tasted the drop of sweet water; then he filled the little opening in the tree with a piece of wood.

"We must not waste a drop of the sap," warned the father. "It will soon be warm enough for Father Sun to awaken all the trees."

Otter and his father went back to the camp and told the people that the hungry time would be over soon.

The good news made everybody happy. The Indians forgot to be sad. They took out their drums and rattles. The old Medicine Man thanked the Good Spirits for their kindness to the red people. He thanked the warm spirits of the South for loosening the icy grip of the Blue Spirits of the North. Then the people had a dance of thanksgiving.

THE MAPLE-SUGAR CAMP

The next morning a crier came out of his wigwam. He had good news and was happy to tell it to the people.

"Father Sun is awakening the trees," he called. "The sap will soon be running. Mother Earth is awakening from her long sleep. The White Spirits from the South are on their way. We must pack and move to the maple-sugar camp."

Everyone but the old people got ready to move out into the woods where the maple trees lived. The old people would stay at home. It would be too hard for them to walk that far.

The Moon of Snowblindness, which we call March, was near. During the day the sun melted the snow and covered it with a film of shining water. North Wind, angry because the sun had been stronger than he, determined to show the White Spirits his great strength. At night he blew his cold breath and gripped the little pud-

dles with his icy fingers. In the morning Father Sun found the little puddles covered with ice again.

A dog could not pull a travois over the rough snow and ice easily; so the women packed many of their things on the backs of the dogs. The rest the women and children carried on their own backs. Some of the things they packed were clothes and robes and skins for their beds.

When all were ready, the Indians started on their way. The snow sparkled in the bright sunshine. Father Sun seemed as happy as the red people. The Indians, slipping and trudging through the wet snow and ice, were thankful for the sun's warm rays.

The women talked and laughed as they walked along. Sometimes the papooses cried. Indian babies do not cry very often. Perhaps they were hungry. The boys shouted as they drove the unwilling dogs over the wet ice. Everyone was happy, especially the children. Otter was having a good time. He and all the other little Indians

were very fond of maple sugar and were glad to be on the way to the sugar camp.

The crows added to the noise. They called to their friends to come and move to the sugar camp with the Indians. Crows are wise birds. They stayed far enough away so that the boys could not reach them when they shot their blunt arrows.

When the Indians traveled under the trees, the squirrels scolded them for breaking the silence of the woods. The blue jays laughed and laughed when they saw how funny the children looked, sliding and falling, as they tried to keep up with the older people and the dogs.

The grove of maple trees was reached at last. In an open space stood the frame of last year's long house. North Wind had tried to blow it over, but he had not been strong enough. The sturdy long house had dared him to do his worst. North Wind had become so angry that he had torn the bark off the roof and the sides. The poles had only laughed and told him to try again. He had

tried, again and again, until finally he had become discouraged and had stopped. The red people found the poles of the long house waiting for their return.

The Indians were tired, but they dropped the bundles they had been carrying and began to work. Darkness would soon wrap her cold mantle around the camp. Not until then would the Indians rest.

Everybody was busy. Otter and the other boys took the loads from the dogs' backs. Then they cleared away the snow and the leaves that had danced into the deserted long house to find shelter during the cold moons. Some of the boys went for birch bark. Others helped to patch the house. Otter helped the women cover the frame of last year's long house with fresh birch bark.

When the long house was finished, each family was given its own little part. Each family hung up robes and skins to separate its things from those of its neighbors.

Then the busy days started. The women made wooden yokes to fit across the shoulders of the



Otter helped the women cover the long house.

boys and girls. With one of these each boy and girl could carry two buckets of sap at a time, a bucket hanging from each end of the yoke. The women hollowed out logs in which to boil the sap. They made birch-bark buckets to catch the sap as it ran from the trees.

Otter and the other boys helped the women bring in great piles of wood. Beside the wood they heaped stones that would be heated to make the sap boil.

The boys fixed their bows and arrows. They would need them to keep the hungry squirrels and rabbits away from the buckets of sap. Animals love the sweet water, and even bears will go into camp to steal it. The little boys practised shooting their blunt arrows at marks on trees while they were waiting for their mothers to call them to eat.

While the women prepared to make the maple sugar, the men made ready for a hunt. They sharpened arrowheads and made new bows. Warm days would be there soon. Then the animal people would return.

The Indians were so busy that they forgot to be cold. They could think only of the good times they were having and of the happy days that were on the way.

Father Sun was getting more courage every day. His warm rays were driving the frost from the ground and had set the streams free from the cold moons' icy grip. The Blue Spirits were being conquered.

The rivers and streams caressed the banks, and the reeds began to push their heads above the shallow waters. The happy water could not feel sad even though it was made muddy by the Indian men. With their nets they caught the fish that were now hurrying upstream to new feeding grounds.

Sometimes the boys hunted along the shores of the rivers and streams. They searched among the reeds and rushes for ducks' nests with eggs in them. The boys were not the only hunters. The old black crows liked duck eggs, too. The crows would rob a nest while the mother duck



1. Tap for running sap into bucket. 2. Bucket for catching sap. 3. Yoke for carrying buckets. 4. Buckets for carrying sap. 5. Stone ax for tapping trees. 6. Two ways of making fire.

QEWL

was away feeding. But this time none of the hunters found nests with eggs in them. It was too early in the year.

The Indians were hungry no longer. Geese and ducks had come north in great numbers. The men had caught plenty of fish. Mother Earth had awakened from her deep sleep and was helping the red people. They had forgotten how cruel the Blue Spirits of the North had been. Otter went to bed happy every night. He had forgotten that he had ever been a hungry little boy.

At last everything was ready to make the good maple sugar. The women had finished hollowing the logs and making yokes and buckets, and the wood and the stones were gathered. Some women had two or three logs ready, should the trees give generously of their sweet water. The men had cut a little opening in each maple tree and fitted into it a wooden tap. Beneath each tap a birch-bark bucket had been placed to catch the sap.

Otter said good-by to his father as the warriors started off on a hunt. The people were tired

of eating fish and ducks. They were hungry for other meat.

The women and the children stayed in camp to make the sugar. A few warriors stayed with them to protect the camp.

Finally the sap began to flow. Everyone became excited when Otter called, "The sap is running!"

The women started the fires. Otter watched his mother. She rolled her fire stick rapidly between her hands. Its point rubbed against a piece of dry wood. Soon there was a shower of sparks, and the sparks set the dry wood on fire. Otter dropped dry grass and twigs on the flame, blew on it a little, and in a short time the fire burned briskly. Then the mother placed a few of the stones in the fire. They would be hot by the time the first bucket of sweet water was brought from the trees.

The children ran for their yokes and the buckets in which to carry the sap.

At first the sap came slowly; then it dripped

faster. Soon the boys and the girls were filling the hollowed logs with the sweet water, and the women were placing the hot stones in the sap to make it boil.

The little animals seemed to think that the Indians were stealing their food. The trees were their homes. The children did not divide the sweet water with them; so the animal people had to find a way to get some for themselves. They soon learned that they must get their share when the buckets were left without protection.

Otter and his friends learned that they had to watch the buckets all the time. When the boys went away, rabbits and squirrels gnawed holes in the buckets and drank the sap.

The boys made war on the little animal people. They hunted them so hard that soon the animal people were driven away. The boys felt like real warriors. They pretended that they had driven an enemy from the camp. Often they took rabbits and squirrels to their mothers to cook for their dinners.



The women put hot stones into the sap.

Otter was happy. Before the buckets at his trees had filled with sap, he emptied them and hurried back to see if the sap was boiling in the hollowed logs. He often stirred the syrup with a wooden paddle. Sometimes he let a bit of the syrup drop from the paddle onto the snow. He wanted to see if the syrup was thick enough to harden when it cooled. He was hungry for something sweet.

Indian children were allowed to eat as much maple sugar as they liked. The women did not even try to put any of it away until the children had begun to tire of its sweetness.

Then they stored it for the next cold moons. Some of the sugar was put in skin bags, some was made into little cakes and packed in birch-bark cases, and some was stuffed into the bills of ducks and geese, which had been saved for that purpose. When all the sugar was packed away, the sugar harvest was over. The trees had given generously of the good sap.

Otter's father and the warriors had returned

from the hunt with plenty of meat. The women and girls tore the meat into small strips and hung them on racks to dry over low fires. A great many fish had been dried also. Feathers from ducks and geese had been saved to make soft cushions.

After the sugar harvest was over, the men made boats from the hollowed logs in which the women had boiled the sap. The men built fires in the logs to shape the insides. Now that winter no longer held the river in his icy grip, the Indians could return to their village in these boats.

No one was in a hurry now. The Moon of Snowblindness had gone, and the Moon of Summer's Return had come. It was a resting time.



A NEW WARRIOR

One day Otter went to the river with his father. They sat on the shore and watched a muskrat near the opposite bank. He was carrying mud and rushes to repair the damage that the ice had done to his home during the cold moons.

The sun had kissed the buds and had awakened the leaflets from their winter sleep. The tall grasses rustled as the breezes gently swayed their leaves. The shores seemed to laugh as they felt the water flow against their soft banks.

A kingfisher hovered over the river and then dropped to the water and caught a minnow in his long bill.

Otter and his father heard a noise behind them. They looked around and saw a woman approaching. In her arms she was carrying a bundle wrapped in buckskin. She was Otter's mother.

"I have brought you a new little warrior," the happy mother said to Otter's father.



"I have brought you a new warrior," said the mother.

“And to you, my little one,” she said to Otter, “I am giving a baby brother.”

The father and his small boy stood up. Otter did not know whether or not he wanted to share his warrior father with a little brother.

“The brother is very small,” the father said. “He will have to stay at home on his baby board for a long time.”

Then Otter forgot to be sorry and ran off to tell his playfellows what his mother had given him.

The father, too, wanted to tell of the new little warrior. As he walked back to the long house with the mother, he said, “I shall give a feast. We shall have maple sugar and meat.”

Otter’s father had brought a great deal of meat back from the hunt. They would have meat and maple sugar at the feast for the new baby.

The mother tied the baby on his new baby board and leaned it against the side of the long house. Then she called Otter to watch his little brother while she went to the river for a bucket of water.

The baby must have been hungry, for he began to cry.

"Do not cry, little brother," Otter said. "The owls might hear you!"

The little brother kept right on crying. Otter wondered what he should do. If the owls heard an Indian boy cry, they might tell everybody, the wilderness people too, that he was not brave. They might say that that boy would never become a great warrior.

At last Otter thought of the maple sugar his mother had given him. He held it to the baby's mouth. The baby stopped crying at once. He must have liked the sugar because he started to cry again when Otter took it away. Otter put the sugar back to the baby's mouth and did not take it away again. Otter did not want the owls to hear his little brother cry.

When the mother returned, she took the little warrior in her arms and gave him some food. Soon the baby was asleep.

The happy father stood outside the long house.



Otter held maple sugar to the baby's mouth.

Otter could see no reason for his father's being so happy.

"Hark!" called the father. "A new warrior has come to live with us. I shall give a feast."

Otter did not know what a feast for a new baby would be like. He had never had a baby brother before, and of course he could not remember the feast that his father had given for him when he was a baby boy.

The day of the feast seemed much longer to Otter than other days. The sun seemed to stand still.

"The sun does not want to go to bed to-day," said Otter. "I have seen meat roasting over the fire, and we are going to have maple sugar, too. I can hardly wait until the feast."

While he was waiting to be called to the feast, Otter played with his friends. They sat in a circle and passed a stone from one to another. A boy standing in the center of the ring tried to guess who held the stone.

A ground squirrel ran down a near-by tree.

He tried to tell the boys to play somewhere else. That tree was his home, and he had not invited them to come there.

An old man saw the boys playing. He walked over to them, and they all stood up. As soon as they can understand, little Indian boys and girls are taught to be polite. They always stop whatever they are doing and listen when their elders talk to them, and they never interrupt.

"Listen," said the old man. "Did you see the long black stripes on the squirrel's back? I will tell you how he got them.

"Many, many snows ago all the animal people sat in a council. They were trying to decide how the time should be divided into day and night. The bear, the biggest fellow there, liked darkness best and wanted it to be dark all the time. The little ground squirrel did not agree with the bear. He wanted it to be daylight part of the time.

"The bear became very angry, and the little squirrel became frightened. He tried to run away, and the bear reached out a paw to catch him. The



A feast was given for the little new baby

bear's sharp claws scratched right down the squirrel's back. That is why he has those long black stripes. They are scars.

"Now run, Otter. I hear your mother calling you to the feast."

Otter said, "Thank you" and ran to the long house.

A few guests had already arrived. A Medicine Man sat behind the fire and at the left of the father. Otter sat down beside his mother and the new baby.

Deer meat was roasting over the fire. When all the guests were seated, Otter's father took a piece of the meat and silently held it to the north, the south, the east, and the west. Then he held it up toward the heavens, down toward the earth, and at last dropped it into the fire. The smoke from the burning meat carried the Indians' prayers to the Spirit Land.

The feast was being given for the baby. The father prayed for the Great Mystery to make his boy strong and tall.

Then the Medicine Man stood up. He raised his hands toward the heavens. He asked the Great Mystery to protect the baby boy. He asked the Great Mystery to help the boy grow up to be a brave warrior.

Next everyone ate the food that had been placed before him and talked and had a good time.

The little new baby just went to sleep. He did not care what the older people were doing. He did not even know that the feast was being given for him.

"Listen!" the father said, and everyone stopped talking. "Do you hear the fox barking in the moonlight? I shall name my little warrior Fox."

The Medicine Man thought that perhaps the fox had smelled the meat and had come to get some.

"The fox is cunning. He is wise," said the Medicine Man. "We wish for this little warrior the cunning and the great wisdom of the fox."

The father went out of the long house and

brought in two baby dogs. He presented the puppies to the Medicine Man for his good wishes.

The feast was over. Otter's little brother had a name and had been welcomed into the tribe.



SECRETS OF THE WOODS

On the trees the tiny buds had lost their winter blankets, and the leaves were losing their baby color. The boys knew that this was the time of year to learn many secrets of the woods.

Otter and his friends started off on a hunt. Each boy took along his bow and arrows. They started down the trail, playing the touch game. The touch game is like tag. The boys were having a good time. They forgot what their fathers had told them about being quiet. It was not long before a warrior stopped them.

"Little sons," he said, "you are going into the woods to learn the ways of the animal people. You must go more quietly, or the animals will hear you and hide. You will not even know that any of them are near."

The boys took warning and separated. Each went with his own particular friend. Indian children select a special friend when they are very

young. The two are companions all through life and will even risk death to help each other.

Otter and his friend, Red Deer, started for the river. They walked very carefully and quietly. Near the river they frightened an old duck. She fluttered away as if her wing was broken. The boys tried to catch her, but after she had led them quite a chase, she flew away. That was her way of leading an enemy from her nest.

Then Otter and Red Deer crept along the bank of the stream so that they would neither disturb the animal people nor warn them that danger was near.

Just in front of them the boys saw a head come out of the water. Otter touched Red Deer, but neither said a word. Soon an otter crawled out of the water. He stopped for a moment and looked around. Then he ran up the bank. There he raised his head and sniffed the air. His nose would warn him of any danger. The boys did not make a sound. The wind was blowing toward them. It could not carry their scent to the otter.

The otter must have decided that he was alone. He did not see any danger, nor did his nose warn him of any. He continued his play. The boys saw him slide down the muddy bank and splash into the water. Otter and Red Deer liked to play that game, too, but they waited for warm, sunny days.

Otter and Red Deer left the otter at his play and went on. They crept along slowly. Many of the woods people had come out of their homes to play in the sunshine.

"Look," said Otter. "There is a beaver dam. Let us cross."

As the boys started for the dam, they saw the tracks of a puma in the soft ground. That silent hunter had dragged his prey to a lonely place where he could enjoy his meal.

"He is a wicked hunter," said Otter. "Let us get away from here as quickly as we can. Do not make a noise, or we might disturb him at his feast. He might think that we are trying to get his food."



The boys saw an otter slide down the muddy bank.

"It looks as if he caught a beaver," said Red Deer.

The boys could see where a beaver's claws and rough tail had left their marks in the soft dirt. They found little bunches of hair hanging in the brush, too.

"We'll cross the dam and not come back this way," said Otter. "We can go back to camp by another trail."

It was fun to walk along the dam. A beaver slapped the water with his flat tail. That was a warning of danger to his people. Then he dived into the water, and everything was quiet. The boys watched the bubbles that came to the top of the water. Otter and Red Deer knew that the beaver had gone down to hide in his house until the danger to his family and himself had passed.

Otter and Red Deer wondered why the beaver had been out. The sun had not gone to rest. They knew that beavers seldom appear in the daytime.

"Perhaps he found that the water was getting low around his house and came out to see if the

dam was broken,” said Otter. “Do you see how much deeper the water is on the upstream side of the dam than below it?”

“That is because this dam is here,” said Red Deer. “If a stream is not very deep, beavers build a dam to form a pond around their house. Then they always have plenty of water, even if there is only a little rain during the warm moons. My father has often told me how wise beavers are.”

The boys saw a shadow on the water. Looking up, they saw a fish hawk flying over their heads. He had caught a fish and was flying toward his nest. A bald-headed eagle, soaring above him, saw the fish, folded his wings, and dropped straight down toward the fish hawk. The hawk saw the eagle. In his fright he dropped the fish. Before the fish reached the water, the eagle had it in his claws and flew away.

“Red Deer,” said Otter, “the bald-headed eagle is a great thief.”

Around a curve in the river, the boys saw a raccoon. They hid behind a tree and watched

him. He was washing a frog that he had just caught. Raccoons always wash their food before they eat it. The frog was trying to get away. The boys decided to help him. They walked out from behind the tree. The raccoon was so surprised and frightened that he let the frog go and climbed the nearest tree. The frog, with a happy croak, dived into the stream, free.

“Are you not glad, Otter, that the raccoon is afraid of the man people?” asked Red Deer. “Do you know the story?”

Otter had not heard the story; so Red Deer told it to him. He said that many snows ago the raccoon was one of the largest animals. All the other animal people were afraid of him. He caught and ate them.

One day the raccoon stopped at a wigwam to trade with an Indian woman. She traded for his mittens.

The woman's children were hungry. She went away to trade the mittens for food. The children stayed at home, alone.



A raccoon was washing a frog in the stream.

It was during the Moon of Cracking Trees. The raccoon was cold without his mittens. He went back to steal them.

When the Indian woman returned, only one of her children was in the wigwam to tell her what had happened.

The Indian woman became very angry and went out to find the raccoon. When she caught him, she beat him with a long switch. Every time she struck him, he grew smaller. When he was so small that he would have to fear the larger woodland people, she struck his tail and left scars. She told him that those rings on his tail would always remind him of his punishment.

Since then the raccoon has been afraid of the man people and has had to go without mittens on his hands.

When the animal people saw the raccoon's ringed tail and how small he had become, they laughed. The frog laughed so hard that the raccoon became very angry. He tried to catch the frog. Since then only the smaller animal people

have been afraid of the raccoon, and he is a special enemy of the frog.

"That is a good story," said Otter.

The boys left the river and walked into the woods. There they saw a fat old porcupine with his spiny back. He was slowly waddling along. The porcupine has no fear of the woods people. His thorny coat of quills protects him from danger, and he is very independent and troublesome. When he got into a camp, he gnawed the ax handles and ruined them.

The two boys were very careful about where they stepped. A twig might snap, or a little pebble might strike against another if it was kicked accidentally. The slightest noise would warn the animal people that an enemy was near.

Otter and Red Deer passed a leafy thicket and were attracted by what they thought were spots of sunlight. They looked more closely and saw that the spots were the baby clothes of a tiny fawn. They went nearer to see him better. The fawn was not afraid. His mother had hidden him where

he would be safe from woodland enemies. A fawn has no odor; so the breezes cannot tell where his hiding-place is.

A little farther on the boys found the tracks of an old bear that had been followed by her two little cubs. The boys saw where the mother bear had torn a rotten stump all to pieces to find grubs for her babies. That must have been their evening meal.

In the distance the boys heard the crows calling. Perhaps they were holding a council. Perhaps they had found food and were calling their friends to come to the feast. Then the boys heard the happy call of a robin. He was telling his mate that he had found a good place to build the nest.

A heavy cloud hid the face of Father Sun. The woods seemed hushed and shadowy. A little rabbit quietly looked about for food. He was hunting for his evening meal. Spying the boys, he darted behind a bush.

Suddenly Otter and Red Deer were startled by the loud hoot of an owl. They jumped and ran.

They forgot to be quiet. The owl was welcoming night with its cloak of darkness. The boys knew that if they did not get home very soon, they would meet the night prowlers of the woods, the savage wilderness people.



HOME AGAIN

"To-morrow we shall leave for home," said the leader of the Indians. "It is nearly time for planting."

The leaves were no longer small. They were reminding the people that the Moon of Flowers, or May, had arrived. The ground was covered with a carpet of soft green grass studded with yellow flowers. The women gathered the tender leaves of dandelions to boil and eat.

The whole camp was busy at once. The boys called the dogs, the women got the packs together, and the men carried the log boats to the river. Only the lazy sunshine did not work, but it was warm and cheerful and made the man and animal people happy.

"Otter," said his father. "There are not enough boats to carry everyone back to the village. Some of the people must walk home over the woodland trail. Red Deer and his father are going to



The Indians got ready to leave for home.

walk. You take the dog and go with them. I shall take the mother and little Fox in the boat."

Otter was sorry to leave the woods. He loved the woods people, and he knew it was nesting time. He had seen the birds carrying little twigs. He had seen where nests had been started in the trees. Soon there would be eggs in the nests of ducks and geese. Otter liked duck eggs. But there would also be many nests on the banks of the river where he lived. He could hunt nests while he watched the rice fields.

The next morning the sun lazily crept over the hills to say good morning to the Indian people. They had been playing in the maple-sugar camp when he went to bed the night before, but now no one was there. Before the sun had awakened, the Indians had said good-by to the sugar camp for another long year. The long house was lonesome. All that the sun could see were the bark buckets and other things that the Indians did not need and had left behind.

Soon the squirrels and the field mice would

have courage enough to live in the long house again. They were still afraid; it was such a short time since they had been driven not only from the long house but even away from their tree homes.

As the sun rose higher and higher in the sky, he followed all the trails and soon caught up with the moving people. The Indians were just as happy to welcome their friend in the heavens as he was to find them. They thanked Father Sun for driving away the Cloud People, who had wrapped them in a heavy gray cloak of early morning dampness.

Otter's father was taking the mother and little Fox down the river in his log boat. That was easier for the mother than walking and carrying the new warrior on her back. The river seemed to be in a great hurry to join the waters of the large lake far below.

Otter and Red Deer were walking through the woods. The dogs were following them on the woodland trail over which all the Indians had come only a short time before.



Otter and Red Deer walked through the woods.

Otter felt very grown-up. On the way to the sugar camp he had been the "baby," but now he was the "big brother." He almost felt as though he were a warrior because his father had trusted him to travel over the trail and take the dog home. Of course, the father had no cause to worry. Otter was with Red Deer and Red Deer's father.

The boys had no time to play now—at least they thought they did not have time. They had to watch the dogs and take care of the packs. Otter and Red Deer heard the squirrels chattering and the bluebirds laughing, but the boys paid no attention to them. They did not even chase the rabbits that were just finishing their early morning meals.

"Look, Red Deer," said Otter, pointing to the pale moon just halfway across the sky. "The moon slept too late. She could not get to her home in the West before the sun got up. Did you hear the story Big Moon told last night?"

Big Moon was one of the story-tellers. He told the stories of his people to the children so

that the stories would live. When those children had grown to be men and women, other storytellers would tell the stories to their children.

Red Deer had not heard the story. He was ashamed, for he had fallen asleep.

"Well, listen," said Otter. "Big Moon said that once, long ago, long before he could remember, the sun went to visit the moon. The sun wore a dark cloak over his face so that the moon could not see who her visitor was. The moon was very young then, and she fell in love with the big warrior. But he would never uncover his face when he talked with her.

"The moon decided that she would peep at her visitor sometime to see if he was handsome. Early one morning when he was asleep she lifted the cloak from his face and saw that the big warrior was her brother!

"Then she was angry. She was so angry that even now she always turns her back to him. She has never, even once, let him see her face since that time."

“That is a good story,” said Red Deer. “I am glad you told it to me, and I shall always remember it.”

All day long the Indians followed the trail. Just before the sun went to rest, they reached the water that separated them from their main camp. On the opposite bank were the log boats in which the other Indians had come down the river. They were waiting to help their friends home.

Otter's father helped take the people across the river in the log boats. All the older people were taken first. Otter and Red Deer thought it would never be their turn.

Otter wondered how big the little puppies were that his grandmother had let him play with before he went to the sugar camp. He wondered if his grandmother and grandfather would love the little new baby. Then he had no more time to wonder about anything, for he heard his father call.

“Come, Otter and Red Deer. Bring your dogs and get into this canoe,” the father said.

The boys obeyed quickly. The father put his

paddle into the water and did not take it out until they were across the river. When an Indian paddles his canoe, he seldom takes the paddle out of the water. That is how he paddles without making any noise.

When they were across the river, the father pushed the paddle into the sand and held the boat steady while the boys and the dogs jumped to the shore. Shouting their thanks, the boys ran to their wigwams. The dogs ran home, too. They were tired of carrying the packs and wanted to have them taken off. Everybody was glad to be home again.

Otter and Red Deer could not wait until the next day to go out to the bark hut they had built for themselves in the woods. They had hidden their tops and bows and their new lacrosse sticks there before they went to the sugar camp.

"Come on, Otter," said Red Deer, "let us go to our hiding place and see if everything is still there."

The two boys ran off all by themselves.



Otter and Red Deer crawled into their hiding place.

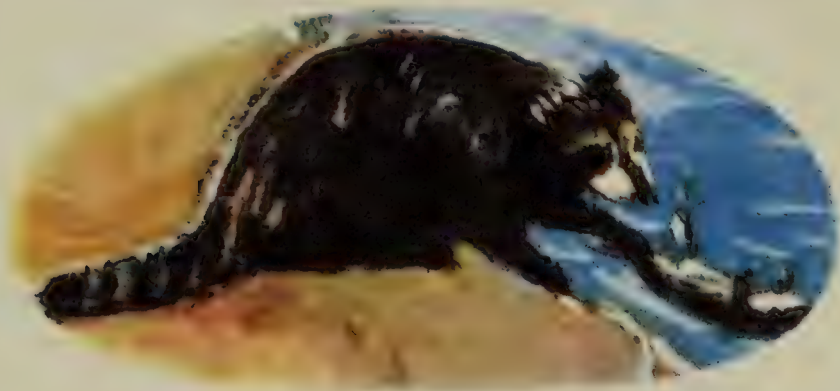
They crawled into the little hiding place to see what had happened while they were at the sugar camp. The bone tops were gone. In their places the boys found stones. Perhaps a trade, or pack, rat had taken the tops. Trade rats always leave something in place of what they take, but often the trade is not appreciated by the one who is robbed. The strings were eaten out of the lacrosse sticks, and the strings were gone from the bows. Some of the little woods people had found the hiding place.

At first the boys were disappointed. Then they remembered that it would not take long to repair the sticks and bows. The old strings would have been spoiled anyway. But the boys did feel annoyed about the tops. They had worked hard to make them.

Otter and Red Deer decided that they would replace the bowstrings first. Soon the boys would have to help in the fields. After each day's work was done, they would come to their hut and work on the bowstrings. They would need the bows

when they watched the rice and the cornfields. Otter and Red Deer knew that their fathers would give them enough sinew to make new strings for their bows and lacrosse sticks.

The boys ran back to the camp. The women and the men were sitting in groups, telling of all that had happened during the cold moons. Those who had been away listened to the news of the village, and those who had stayed at home enjoyed some of the good maple sugar that the women had brought back with them.



PLANTING THE CORN

The rising sun was just beginning to light the eastern sky when an old Indian walked through the camp, beating his drum. He was the crier. Otter jumped from his bed of furs.

"The day has come! The sun is almost here! To-day you must prepare the fields for planting," called the old man.

The crier called until every wigwam doorway was full of people. It was not long before smoke was rising from many fires on its way toward the heavens.

The day was still gray when the women were getting the early meal ready for their families. Otter was cold, and he did a little war dance around the fire to keep warm. The mother handed him a birch-bark bucket.

"Fill this bucket with water, Otter. It will make you warm to run down to the stream and back," she said.



The crier called the people to dig in the fields.

Otter gave the whistle of the whippoorwill, and Red Deer came out of his wigwam. When the boys had first chosen each other for best friends, they had agreed to whistle the cry of the whippoorwill when one wanted the other. These playfellows were apart only when night sent them to bed. They even slept together when they could get permission from their parents.

The two boys ran to the river, very quietly, of course. If they made noise, some old man would surely stop them and warn them to be quiet. The boys did not want a warning. As they hurried along the trail, they watched for their woodland neighbors.

"Look," said Otter very softly.

Red Deer looked where Otter was pointing. In a little open space a beautiful ruffed grouse was strutting about as if he was very proud of himself. He was showing his lady friends what a beautiful bird he was.

The boys did not frighten him. They filled the bucket with water and then went back to eat

their early meal. They knew that they would have to help in the field that day and that there was no time to play.

After the early meal was over, all the people went into the field. It was a large clearing. One part of it was set aside to grow the sacred tobacco. An old Medicine Man raised his hands toward the heavens and asked the Good Spirits to watch over the crops and make them grow.

As soon as the Medicine Man finished the prayer, the men went home to work on their bows and arrows. The mothers hung their baby boards on branches of near-by trees, or leaned the boards against tree trunks where they could watch the babies.

Then the women and children began to dig. Some used hoes made from the shoulder blades of buffaloes; others had the sharp end of deer or antelope horns for the tip of their long sticks. All worked very hard, but they talked and laughed and enjoyed the work that came with the Moon of Flowers.



The women and children worked in the field.

The boys teased one another, and the women joked. The little girls had brought maple sugar with them. As soon as the boys knew that, they were very kind and tried to help the girls. But the girls did not want any help at all. They did not think it was hard work to dig the soft earth and loosen it for planting. However, the girls were not selfish. When they thought they had teased the boys long enough, they gave them a taste of their maple sugar and told them to bring some also the next time.

The dogs could not understand why the children would not play with them. They thought that the boys might be digging up a bone, and they wanted it should the boys find one.

The field was ready for planting long before Father Sun went to bed, and everybody went home for a good rest. They knew there would be another busy day when the sun awakened them again.

The next morning a tired sun crawled into the eastern sky. He waited there just long enough

to hear the old crier send the people out to plant, then hid his face behind a big black cloud.

"I shall not plant to-day," said Otter's mother. "Little Fox is too small to be taken into the field when the Rain People come down to the thirsty earth."

Otter gave the call of the whippoorwill, and Red Deer joined him. The mother could not plant, but Otter and Red Deer would. Together they could do the work that fell to both families.

The two boys hurried down the trail to the field. Each carried a bag of seed corn and a digging stick. Otter and Red Deer had long hours of work to do; but if they began early and did not stop to play, they could finish the work in time to go to their little wigwam in the woods. The boys wanted to repair their bows and lacrosse sticks so that they would be ready when they were wanted.

Otter and Red Deer were the first to arrive at the cornfield that morning, but they were not alone long. Everybody came early. All the



Each boy carried seed corn and a digging stick

people wanted to finish the planting and be ready to go home before the Cloud People sent down the rain that would make the seed begin to grow.

First Otter dug holes, and Red Deer dropped in the kernels of corn and covered them with earth. Then the boys changed places. Soon they had planted all their corn.

Red Deer and Otter ran off to their little hut in the woods. Just as they got there, the Rain People came out of their wigwams. Red Deer and Otter had built their hut carefully; the Rain People could not find the way in.

When their fathers had given them sinew for new bowstrings, the boys had taken it to their hut and put it into a bucket of water. Soaking made the sinew soft. Now the boys found that it was ready to be fitted to their bows.

The boys worked busily. Long before they left their playhouse to go home, they had finished their bows and had begun work on their lacrosse sticks.

The Rain People had watered the gardens while

Otter and Red Deer were in their wigwam. As the two boys hurried through the woods, the sun was shining and driving the clouds away. The boys stopped and looked at the sky. In the heaven they saw a beautiful rainbow. That is the trail of the Indian forefathers in the Spirit Land, reaching from one end of the world to the other.



A NEW CANOE

"I shall have to build a new canoe," said the father. "We shall need it during the Harvest Moon when we gather the rice."

From the wood of the cedar tree, the father built a frame for the new canoe. Then he called Otter.

"Come, Otter," he said. "We must get the bark."

They started for the woods. The White Spirits of the South had arrived, and the days were warm. Boys were playing in their canoes on the river. Shoots of new rice were lying on top of the water. The pale yellow-green blossoms gave promise of a good harvest. Otter and his father noticed that the birds were beginning to gather.

"The crows must have seen us planting," said Otter to his father. "They are holding a council.

Do you think they are planning a war party on our newly planted field?"

Otter wished that he could understand the language of the crows so that he would know what they were saying. He knew that the birds would begin to pull at the corn as soon as the little green shoots showed themselves above the ground. Then all the children would have a good time watching the fields so that the crows could not destroy the corn.

Soon Otter and his father reached the woods where the best birch trees lived. They passed many trees before the father found one that satisfied him. At last he stopped in front of a large yellow birch tree. Otter could see no limbs on it until he looked away up high.

The father took out his bone knife and cut a ring around the tree, close to its roots. He climbed the tree and cut another ring about twelve feet above the first. Then he cut a straight line down the trunk between the two rings. The bark sprang away from the tree trunk on both

sides of the line. The father very carefully separated the rest of the bark from the trunk with his hands. Otter wished that he might help do that. The bark came from the tree in one large piece. The father cut smaller pieces of bark from other trees until he had all that would be needed to cover the frame of the canoe.

Otter and his father carried the beautiful pieces of bark home and gave them to the mother. She knew how to make them ready to be put on the frame.

She cut the large piece of bark into the right shape. She cut pieces of the smaller strips so that they would complete a cover for the frame. Then she held the pieces before the fire so that the heat would make them soft. She punched holes along the edges of the bark with her bone awl and fastened the pieces together with strong thread. The mother had made the thread from the strong, slender roots of the spruce tree.

When the pieces were sewed together, the father carefully spread the bark on the ground so

that the side of the bark that had been on the outside of the tree would be on the outside of the canoe. Then he lifted the canoe frame that he had built and placed it in the center of the birch bark. The mother and Otter helped the father pull the bark over the cedar ribs. They tied it along the top of the frame.

“Run and get me the long strip of cedar wood now, Otter,” said the father. “We shall fasten it along the upper part.”

Otter did as his father told him. Then he held the strip of cedar wood in place while his father bound it to the upper edge of the new canoe. Next he ran to get the crosspieces. These were fastened across the top of the canoe to spread and strengthen it. Otter knew that the canoe was almost done.

While Otter and his father had been fitting the crosspieces, the mother had been busy heating pitch. She had taken it from the pine trees.

“We are ready for the pitch now,” said the father, turning the canoe bottom side up.



The mother and Otter helped make the canoe.

The mother brought the boiling, dark brown pitch to the canoe. She spread the hot pitch over all the seams. That would keep the water from coming through them. Then, with a flaming stick, she poked more pitch into each little hole where she had sewed. The canoe was done.

"Let us carry it to the water," said Otter.

He and his father took hold of the ends of the canoe and carried it to the river. They slid the canoe into the water. It floated as gracefully as a leaf. Otter and his father jumped into the canoe. It did not leak.

"It does not leak," said Otter. "Our canoe is good."

The father dipped his paddle into the water. The canoe responded to his slightest touch.

"Yes," said the father. "The canoe is good."

"May Red Deer and I use this canoe? The boys are going to have a boat race, and I would like to try it," said Otter.

The father said that they might.

Otter paddled off alone to join the boys.

They had pulled their canoes up on the bank of the river near the village and were playing with their tops.

“Come on, boys,” called Otter. “Let us have the race now. Red Deer and I are going to use this new canoe.”

Two boys were to paddle in each canoe. At a signal all the boys were to start together, run to the shore, push their canoes into the water, and race. The boys who could run fastest would get to their canoes first. That was the easiest part. Getting into the canoes was the time when they had to be careful.

The signal was given. Otter and Red Deer ran to the shore. As Red Deer was the heavier, he jumped into the back of the canoe. Otter tried to jump into the front, but he was in such a hurry that he forgot to be careful. Over went the canoe, and both boys fell into the water.

There were six canoes, but only five of them started together. They sped through the water without a sound. If the boys had not been laugh-



Otter and Red Deer passed the slowest canoe.

ing and shouting, even the cranes nesting on the shore could not have heard the canoes pass.

It took Otter and Red Deer some time to throw the water out of their boat and get started. They felt sure that they would come in last, but they did not give up the race. They hoped they could at least catch up with the slowest canoe. Both boys could paddle well, and they paddled harder than they ever had before.

Finally they caught up with the last canoe. Just before the end of the race, they passed it. They had to take fifth place, but they were very glad that they had paddled fast enough to get in before the slowest canoe. Otter knew that losing the race was all his fault. He decided that he would be more careful the next time they had a canoe race. .

THE ARROWHEAD-MAKER

Otter helped his father make many long arrow shafts. They selected strong, slender sticks or reeds and cut them into the right lengths. Later they would fasten an arrowhead on one end of each shaft and feathers to the other.

Otter hoped that his father would take him along when he went to make the arrowheads at the arrowhead-maker's lodge. The father would need many stout arrows when he went on the hunt with the warriors.

"To-morrow I shall go to the home of the arrowhead-maker," said the father.

Otter watched him wrap in a piece of buckskin his stone hammer and the handstone that he used in chipping arrowheads. Then Otter went to bed.

It was still dark when he heard his father say, "Come, my son! You must hurry if you want to go with me."

Otter had never before awakened and prepared to leave home in such a short time. He helped his father push the new canoe into the water, and they paddled up the river. There were many things to see in the water and along the shore, but Otter was interested only in the arrowhead-maker's lodge.

Suddenly the soft wind brought the song of the quarry workers to Otter's ears. Then he knew they were not far from the arrowhead-maker's lodge. Otter and his father were passing the quarry where Indians were digging around the stone they wanted. Some were clearing away the dirt. Others were pounding off large pieces of stone with heavy hammers. These large pieces of stone were taken to the arrowhead-maker's lodge. There they were shaped into arrowheads.

When Otter and his father reached the lodge, they heard the Indians singing the songs of the arrowhead. The father sat upon the ground, put a lap-stone on his lap, and broke a piece of arrowhead stone into the size he wanted. Otter did



A warrior helped Otter's father make arrowheads.

not know how to hold the arrowhead stone for his father. A warrior friend came over and held the stone steady while the father chipped it.

Otter's father held his chipping tool, a sharp split stone, against the arrowhead with one hand. With the other he struck a quick blow with his stone hammer. Each time he struck the chipping tool, a chip flew off the stone, and Otter's father turned the arrowhead in his hand to see that the point was being cut right.

When the arrowhead was almost finished, the father took the handstone in the palm of his hand. He held the arrow point against it. Then, with the other hand, he carefully pressed a bone against the arrowhead until its entire edge was even and sharp.

As soon as the father's bag was full of arrowheads, he sang the bird-arrowhead song. From one of the small pieces of stone, he helped Otter make an arrowhead for himself. It was not very well made, but Otter liked it because it was his own.

Then Otter and his father picked up their arrowheads and started for home.

When they arrived at the wigwam, Otter helped his father fasten the arrowheads to the beautiful straight shafts which they had left with the mother and Fox. The father split one end of each shaft and inserted the small, notched edge of an arrowhead. Then he wrapped it tightly with sinew and covered the sinew with spruce gum.

In the opposite end of the shaft he cut a notch to fit the bowstring. Just ahead of the notch he glued lengthwise three, split, wing feathers of a wild goose. The glue was made from the hoofs of animals, and the feathers would guide the arrow in its flight.

Then the father marked each arrow with his own sign. That was the way he would know which game was his when he and warrior friends went off on a hunt. The hunters would go to the woodlands while the women and children harvested the crops.

PLAYTIME

Otter liked to hear his father tell stories of the trail, but this was the Moon of Strawberries. The sun and the Rain People had coaxed the corn seeds to grow, and they had sent up slender pointed leaves. Wild rice was growing along the river, too.

Great flocks of blackbirds and crows had arrived. They tried to pull up and destroy the tender green shoots of corn. They wanted to eat the rice.

The corn and the rice could not hide themselves from their hungry enemies. The little red boys and girls had to be their protectors. The Indians did not want another hungry, cold time. They needed plentiful crops of corn and rice to keep them from starving should all the animal people hide again during the next cold moons.

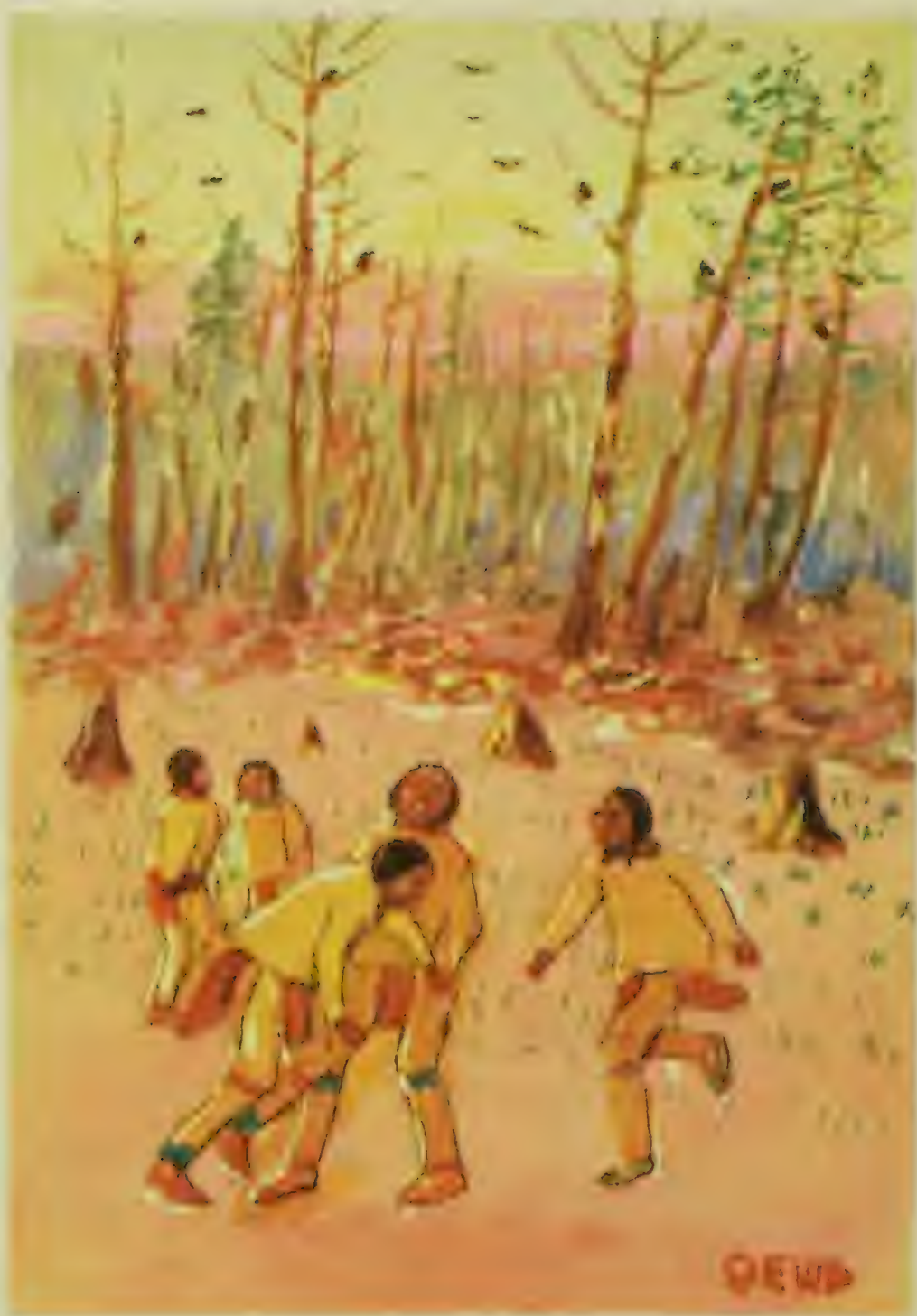
Each day Otter, Red Deer, and all the other

Indian boys watched the cornfield. They liked to do that, for then they could play all day long and they did not have to be quiet. If they played quiet games, the birds would not be afraid to attack the crops. If they shouted and played noisy games, the birds would not dare to come near.

“Let us wrestle,” shouted Otter one day. All the boys could play that game.

The boys chose sides, and then the game began. The boys did not use their hands at all. They tried to trip each other with their feet or legs. They bumped each other with their knees, too. If a boy fell down, no one could touch him. Wrestling was a good game. The boys made so much noise playing it that the birds were afraid to go near.

When the sun went to rest, the boys stopped their play. Then it was time for the birds to go home for the night. The boys went to their homes, too, and they found good suppers waiting for them.



The boys wrestled in the cornfield.

When the rice was beginning to head, the little girls took the canoes and went out to guard it. Two in a canoe, they slowly paddled in and out of the tall grasses.

Little Indian girls have calls to attract the attention of their friends just as their brothers do. If one little girl gave the hoot of the owl, another might answer with the caw of the crow or the scream of the blue jay. Sometimes, if there were a great many crows to drive away, the little girls gave the call of the kingbird. That frightened the crows, and they hurried away. Crows do not like the kingbird. He is always at war with them.

The little girls took their buckskin dolls with them when they went out in the canoes. They loved their buckskin babies and liked to play house. They pretended the canoes were their wigwams.

Two little girls paddled their canoe to the side of another.

“May we come in, friend?” they asked.

"Come in and sit down, friend," the other little girls answered.

Then they held the canoes side by side and talked just as they had heard their mothers talk.

Sometimes the little girls pretended they were not at home. Then they did not answer the visitors.

In each canoe the girls carried a buckskin robe and a rattle. When the troublesome birds came near, the girls stood up and shook the robes and rattles at them. That frightened the birds away.

The little girls played all day. When the mist maidens came out of their water homes to play and dance during the evening and night, the children paddled to the shore. They went home and waited for Father Sun to send them back to their play again in the morning.

These little Indian children liked to watch the mists rise out of the lakes and the rivers after the sun had gone to bed. They did not say, as their white brothers do, that the fog was rising.



The girls shook robes to frighten the birds away.

They knew that it was the water maidens coming out to play.

One evening a group of children was sitting on the bank of a stream, watching the mists rise. A story-teller saw them and joined the group.

“Listen, children,” he said. “You are watching the water people rise silently from their homes. They love to play at night after the sun has gone to bed and when the silvery moon has grown large enough to light up the night. It is then that the water maidens come out to dance in the moonlight.

“They come softly, and we cannot hear them. At first they only peep above the water. They are afraid that Father Sun may not have gone to his rest. If he was still shining, he would send them right back to their homes in the water.

“You see the mists grow taller and taller. The maidens, in their beautiful mist gowns, hold hands as they dance across the water and into the forests to play with the trees. There are so many maidens that you cannot count them.

“As they dance through the woods and over the fields, they gently touch the grass and the flowers. They kiss the corn and the tobacco that we have planted. Mother Earth thanks them for giving her children a drink of water. Early in the morning, before Father Sun gets up, you will see little beads of water sparkling on every leaflet and blade of grass.”

The Moon of Strawberries had passed. It was now the moon that little white people call July. The little Indians would have wondered what “July” meant. They would have been very polite, but they would have said, “I think you are wrong, little white brother. This is the Moon of Ripe Berries.”

The corn and the rice were growing taller and taller. As they grew taller, they became harder to watch. The birds were hungry, and the food they loved was plentiful. It became a battle between the bird people and the man people. Each wanted the food that Mother Earth was sending to all her children.

"Come, Otter," said the father. "Red Deer and his father are going to the cornfield too this morning. We shall build little platforms. The girls can stand on them and shake blankets to frighten the birds. The corn is tall, and the crows will steal the kernels if we are not careful."

Otter and Red Deer helped their fathers build little platforms in the cornfield. Then the girls stood upon them and shook robes and rattled gourds to frighten the birds away. The boys played hide-and-seek in the tall corn stalks, and the noise made by the rustling leaves frightened the birds so that they dared not come near. The boys and girls worked together now. There were so many birds in the flocks that the sky often looked as if the black Cloud People were coming.

The children in the canoes had no time to play, but kept paddling about in the rice fields. There ducks and geese, as well as birds, had to be driven away. Wild rice is the favorite food of ducks and geese. The children wished they could

find duck eggs, but it was too late in the year for them. They were plentiful only in the Moon of Summer's Return and in the Moon of Flowers. The boys took their bows and arrows with them to the rice fields and often brought ducks and geese home to their mothers.

While Otter was watching the corn and the rice fields, his mother tied Fox on the baby board, put him on her back, and went out to the berry patches. Fox slept and grew in the warm sunshine.

The mother filled her buckets with ripe berries. Otter ate some of them with his evening meal. The mother dried the rest and put them away for use during the cold moons. Everyday, as soon as the sun bid the Indians good morning, the women spread robes on the ground. They scattered their berries upon them for the hot sun to dry. These were busy days for the women. They did not waste even a moment.

The rice was growing fast. It would soon be ready to gather, and there would be a large crop.



The mother took Fox to the berry patches.

It was time for the women to go out and prepare the rice for gathering.

The mother said, "To-morrow I shall have to go to the rice fields, Otter, and you will go with me. I must help tie the rice tops in bunches. I shall need you to hold the canoe steady."

"Is Fox going, too?" asked Otter.

"Yes, Otter, he will like the sunshine," replied the mother.

The next morning Otter was up early. Before his mother and Fox came to the shore, he had the new canoe ready for them. The mother leaned Fox against the center crosspiece of the canoe. Then she sat in the front end. Otter paddled and held the canoe steady while his mother gathered armfuls of the long grasses and tied them into bundles.

With her curved stick, the mother pulled in bunches of rice stalks and carefully tied them together. Then she looped over the top and tied it to the main stem so that the grains would not fall into the river as they ripened.

There were so many canoes on the water that it seemed as if the whole village was busy.

Fox seemed to like being in the canoe. The rippling water played around it and seemed to be singing to Fox. He heard it all and was very happy.

The gentle breezes and the sun tried to see which could paint Fox's cheeks more quickly. The sun put on brown paint, and the breezes added red. Fox smiled and laughed as the long grasses reached over and tickled his face. Otter liked his little brother. He was now willing to share his father with the new baby.



THE HARVEST MOON

The Harvest Moon had risen. The red people were happy. It would soon be time for the women to gather the rice and for the men to go off on a hunt.

The Medicine Man made a prayer to the Rain People. He took out the old buffalo skull which was kept for that purpose. He painted one side of the front with green spots and the other side with red spots. He built a tiny fire. Then he took from his medicine bag some ground cedar and a little sweet grass. He dropped them on the tiny fire.

As the fragrant smoke ascended, the Medicine Man raised his hands to the heavens and appealed to the Rain People. He thanked them for the rain they had brought to make the corn and the rice grow tall and full. Then he prayed for the Rain People to stay away until the Indians had harvested the rice.



The Medicine Man made a prayer to the Rain People.

He told the Thunder Bird that if he sent the Rain People before the rice was harvested, they would loosen the bundles of rice stalks. Then the grains would fall into the water. The red people could not gather rice that had fallen into the water. They would have to go hungry. The children would cry for food while Mother Earth slept.

Otter and Red Deer helped their fathers build drying frames near the wigwams. When the rice was gathered, the boys would spread part of it on these racks to ripen and dry in the warm sunshine. The women would not wait until the rice was fully ripe to gather it. They would take the grains while they were still a little green.

"Otter," said Red Deer, "let us get the dry grass and cover the tops of our drying frames. We shall not want to take time for that to-morrow if the crier sends the women out to harvest the rice."

"That is a good idea," said Otter, and off they ran to get the grass.

The boys worked quickly. Before long the racks were covered, and all the grass that would be needed to build small drying fires was piled beside them. Two tired boys went to their beds that night.

Otter thought he had closed his eyes only a moment ago when he heard the voice of the tom-tom. The crier was calling to the people:

"The Harvest Moon has arisen. The women must harvest the rice. The men will start off on a hunt. The time of the Harvest Feast will be here soon. We must work while the Thunder Bird keeps the Rain People in their cloud home beyond the blue sky. Awaken!"

When all the village was astir, the voice of the tom-tom stopped.

Very soon the women were on their way to the river to gather rice. Each carried a stick in one hand and a canoe paddle in the other.

"Red Deer's mother and I shall work together in the new canoe," said Otter's mother. "When you see us come in with our canoe full

of rice, you two boys must be at the shore to empty our boat. We must lose no time. Father Sun is shining for us now. He is happy because we have a plentiful crop to harvest. He is helping us."

Otter and Red Deer promised to be ready, and the two women started off in the new canoe. Little Fox had been left with his grandmother for the day.

Otter's mother sat in the front end of the canoe, and Red Deer's mother paddled slowly from the back. Otter's mother pulled the bundles of rice stalks over the edge of the canoe. With her stick she hit the tops of the grasses until all the grains of rice had fallen into the boat.

When her end of the boat was full, she took the paddle and turned the canoe around. Then Otter's mother paddled, and Red Deer's mother gathered the rice. When her end of the canoe was also filled, they paddled to the shore.

Otter and Red Deer were waiting as they had promised. They emptied the rice into large birch-



REMP

Otter's and Red Deer's mothers gathered rice

bark baskets and carried it to the wigwams. The women went back to gather more rice.

The boys spread skins on the ground where the sun was shining brightly. Then they scattered the rice upon the skins to dry.

"I am glad that we put the grass on the drying frames yesterday," said Otter. "Now we do not have to stop our work to get it."

Red Deer was glad, too. The boys spread the next load of rice on the frames. Then they built low fires under them. The heat from the fires helped Father Sun dry the rice.

The boys had to watch every minute so that the fires would not try to burn too high. The fires might try to reach the dry grass on the racks. It would be a great loss to the people if the fire caught the grass and burned all the rice that was spread upon the frames. The Indians could not afford to let the Fire People eat any of it. The red people needed every bit of the rice to use during the cold moons when Mother Earth was resting.

Everybody worked hard. The women worked in the rice fields until all the rice was gathered. Only enough was left in the fields to fall into the water and replant itself for the next year. Although everybody worked from early morning until night, these red people did not forget to give thanks to the White Spirits of the South. The White Spirits were sending the warm breezes that helped Father Sun dry the good crop of rice.

In the trees great flocks of birds were gathering. They were preparing for their flight to the southlands. They flew around in great circles. They seemed to be waiting for friends to come and join them. They alighted in the trees and chattered and chattered as if they were worried because the friends had not yet arrived.

The children watched the busy flocks. This time the boys and girls did not try to drive the birds away. They knew that these birds meant no mischief to the red people. These birds only wanted to go to the home of the White Spirits

where it would be warm. There the strong North Wind could not hurt them.

The men, with their bows and arrows, started off to the woodlands while the women were in the rice fields. The hunters walked in a single file, one following the other. Each hunter took two extra pairs of moccasins. The rough timber and the rocks would soon wear holes through his soft leather shoes. Each man carried a quiver full of arrows. A quiver is a skin bag deep enough to hold arrows. A bow case protected each bow from dampness. The bowstring was made of sinew. If it should get wet, it would soften. Then the hunter would not be able to shoot the arrow from his bow.

All the hunters did not go together. They could not find so much game that way. They went in small groups. Otter's and Red Deer's fathers joined four other hunters. They chose a swamp for their hunting ground. They knew they would find plenty of moose there. At this time of the year, moose like to stay in water.

There they are less troubled by the great swarms of black flies that bother them. While the moose stand in the water, they feed on water-lily pads. They like to graze on tender poplar and birch twigs, too.

The swamp was not far away. The hunters reached it before the sun bid them good-night. They made their camp, but they did not light a fire. The smoke would warn the moose of danger, and they would hurry away.

The hunters ate maple sugar and dried meat while they cut birch bark into strips. They rolled the strips into cones. That made the hunters' moose calls. With them they could imitate the call of a moose so exactly that the moose, himself, would be deceived.

By the time the moose calls were made, Father Sun had gone to bed and it was dark. The hunters lay down and slept.

The next morning they started their hunt. Each Indian went by himself. He was always careful to travel against the wind. Moose have



Moose like to stay near water.

a very keen sense of hearing and of smell. Each hunter was also very particular not to step on dry twigs or brush. He had to walk carefully over the dry leaves that are always in the woodlands to warn the animal people.

Otter's father saw many tracks of the bull and the cow moose. He found places where they had fed in the water. Some of the tracks in the mud were fresh. Water was still leaking into them.

He walked along the side of a little lake. Across the lake he could see a big bull moose feeding. The moose put his head down into the water, away out of sight, to pull up the roots of water lilies. Otter's father could not get to that moose. He had no way of crossing the lake. But he did not frighten him. Perhaps one of the other hunters would find him.

Otter's father walked on. He was very quiet. Suddenly a kingfisher flew up, making a great noise. Otter's father looked across the lake. He saw the big moose raise his head and look up. Then the moose turned around and hurried into

the brush. The kingfisher is the guard of the wilderness. When he gives his call, the woods people know there is danger near. Otter's father went on.

Suddenly he heard another noise. He stood still to listen. It was made by a moose breaking through the brush. The moose had been warned, but Otter's father did not know that he had made the slightest sound. He walked ahead and found the hoof-prints of a cow moose. He passed those tracks and walked farther. Soon he heard the call of a bull moose.

Otter's father found a place to hide behind a clump of bushes. He was hidden, but he could see ahead for quite a distance. He took out his moose call and imitated the call of a cow moose. Then he heard an answer. He imitated the call again. The answer came closer and closer. He could hear the horns knock against trees as the moose came on. At last, after patiently waiting for a long time, Otter's father saw the moose break into the open. He was a big fellow, and he was

well within shot. An arrow flew straight to its mark.

Otter's father prepared the moose to carry back to camp. It was late by the time that he had finished, and he was tired. So he made his camp and rested for the night.

The next morning he tied his tumpline around a large bundle of the meat. He hung the rest of the meat on a limb of a tree. He did not want the wolves to get it while he was away. A tumpline is a broad leather band that fits across the forehead and helps to carry a pack on the back. At each end of the band a long buckskin strap is fastened. The straps are long enough to tie around a large bundle. Otter's father rested the bundle of meat on his back. Its weight was carried by the strap across his forehead. Then he returned to the hunters' camp at the edge of the swamp.

There he found that all the hunters had been successful. They went on a few more hunts. Then they carried the meat to the village. Some



1. A tumpline. 2 and 3. Packages folded and tied. 4. Load carried with a tumpline.

of the meat was saved for the Harvest Feast. The women cut the rest of it into strips and dried it over low, smoking fires. Indians never waste anything.



THE MOON OF FALLING LEAVES

One day in the Moon of Falling Leaves, the crier called the women and children to go to the cornfield. It was time to gather the corn. Gathering the corn was more fun than gathering the rice. Even the little boys and girls of three or four summers could help. These little children were too small to pick the ears of corn from the stalks. But they watched. Every time an ear fell to the ground, one of them was there to pick it up and put it into the big bag. Everybody sang songs of the corn they gathered. They all knew these songs and liked to sing them.

Two girls began to tease each other. Indian mothers do not like that. They do not think it is kind. A girl named Fawn teased her friend, Blue Bird. Blue Bird was slow. She could not gather the corn as fast as the others. Fawn teased her about it. She told Blue Bird that perhaps she had better join the little children.



The women and children harvested the corn.

She could pick up the ears that the women dropped and could carry them to the big bag. Blue Bird was as tall as Fawn, and all the boys and girls laughed. They thought that was a good joke.

Blue Bird, too, laughed at first. She knew that Fawn did not mean to be unkind. But after a while, when the boys and girls did not stop teasing, Blue Bird became very quiet. Otter's mother knew that Blue Bird felt unhappy. Picking corn was fun. Everybody should sing and laugh and be happy.

Otter's mother called Fawn to her, and of course Fawn came right over.

"Fawn," said Otter's mother. "Why are you teasing Blue Bird? Don't you see that Blue Bird is unhappy?"

Fawn was sorry. She had been thoughtless. She had not realized that she was being cruel. Otter's mother told her that she must not hurt her friends' feelings.

"Do you not know," she said, "what hap-

pened to the little girl who was always teasing? Do you not know that the Good Spirits took her away where she could not see her friends any more? -I know your mother has told you that story.”

Fawn’s mother had told her the story one evening as they sat before the fire. The mother had waited until Father Sun and the birds had gone to bed before she told it. She did not want the birds to hear the story. They might tell it to other people. She did not want a story of her people to be carried to a neighboring tribe.

Fawn had not thought about the story, but now she remembered it very well. She was glad that Otter’s mother had reminded her of it. Fawn promised that she would never forget about the story again. She liked Blue Bird. Fawn did not want the Good Spirits to take her away where she could not play with her friends any more.

Without letting Blue Bird know what she was doing, Fawn went to all the children and reminded them of the story. They stopped teasing

Blue Bird and helped their mothers sing the corn songs. Soon everybody was happy again.

By the time the corn was picked, the rice was dry enough to be threshed. The men dug holes in the ground, and the women lined the holes with skin robes. Then they carried the rice in birch-bark buckets and poured it into the holes. The women pounded the rice with long pounding sticks. That loosened the hulls from the grains.

Then the men put on new moccasins and jumped into the holes. They stamped and stamped on the rice and did not stop until they knew the grains of rice were separated from their hulls.

When the men had finished stamping in a hole, the women cleaned the rice. Sometimes two women worked together; other women worked alone. Otter's and Red Deer's mothers worked together. They lifted the robe and the rice from a hole. Holding the corners of the robe, the women shook the rice until their helpers, the Wind People, had blown off all the chaff.

The women who worked alone used baskets made of birch bark. Each woman filled her basket with rice and raised it as high as she could. Then she slowly poured the rice onto a robe which she had spread carefully upon the ground. As she poured the rice from the basket, the Wind People carried away the light chaff. The heavy grains of rice fell to the robe.

When the rice was clean, the women packed it away. Some of it was stored in large birch-bark baskets, and some was packed in deep holes which the women lined carefully with dry grass.

While the men and the women were threshing the grain, the children were having feasts. The girls gathered a little of the rice that had been left in the fields, and the boys brought in one or two ducks. The girls boiled the rice and ducks together just as they had seen their mothers do. Sometimes their mothers gave them maple sugar. Then the boys and girls pretended that they were having a feast day. They played games, and the boys had contests to see who could shoot farthest.



The women threshed the rice.

The work of the harvest was over. There was plenty of grain for the red people to eat until another crop was harvested. They also had some to trade for the things they did not have. There would be enough left for use while the new crop was growing. Mother Earth had been good. The Indians would not be hungry while she slept during the next cold moons. All the red people were looking forward to a good time at the Harvest Feast.



THE HARVEST FEAST

Otter and Red Deer sat outside their little wigwam in the woods. They were watching Father Sun paint the sky beautiful shades of red and gold. That was his promise of another fine day.

The squirrels were well fed and had hidden their winter's supply of food. The muskrats and the beavers had stored many roots and leaves to eat during the cold moons, and now they were resting. More birds were gathering in a great council. They were almost ready to fly south.

The boys started for their homes.

On the way they passed a tall, straight warrior wrapped in a buckskin robe. He was leaning against a tree, playing his love flute. In a few moments the maiden he loved would answer his call. The tender notes of his love flute told her that he was waiting for her.

When an Indian maiden heard the music of a flute that was being played for her, she always



A tall warrior was playing his love flute.

found it necessary to carry water or to visit a neighbor. The old people in her wigwam knew why she suddenly found tasks. They could hear the flute music, too.

Otter and Red Deer saw a girl come out of her wigwam. She carried a birch-bark bucket and pretended that she was going for water. She walked to where her brave was standing, and they stood together and talked while the sun went to rest.

The boys passed quickly. They liked the music, but they did not stop to listen. That would not have been polite. They went on to the Indian village.

The sleepy village was gray and peaceful. Otter's mother was crooning a weird lullaby to Fox. Otter and Red Deer saw braves, wrapped in their buckskin robes, move like shadows about the camp. Their softly moccasined feet did not make a sound. The men were going to their evening meals. It was almost dark now. Even the birds were quiet. They had gone to their nests.

An Indian crier, beating a deep-voiced drum, came out of his wigwam and broke the sleepy quiet of the tired Indian village.

"To-morrow will be feast day," he called as he walked through the village.

That was happy news. Everybody seemed to awaken. The Indians had worked hard and had looked forward for a long time to this day of feasting and play. The Harvest Feast was play-time. The men would play lacrosse, the game everyone liked.

The day was done. Night wrapped its cloak of darkness about the village. Soon all was quiet. The village was asleep. Only the Wind People were awake. They playfully picked tired leaves from their tree homes and gently laid them on their earth mother where they could sleep.

Otter was among the first to arise on the great feast day. Early in the morning he saw shadowy figures of men and women moving about the camp. The women brought in wood and water. The men prepared for the lacrosse game.

The men set posts in the ground, and the players chose sides. Two posts twenty-five feet high were set up at each end of the playing field. Then a pole was laid across the tops of each pair of posts, and the goals were ready. They were about five hundred yards apart. Halfway between the two a stick was driven into the ground. This stick was the starting place.

The players could not touch the ball with their hands; they had to carry it on their lacrosse sticks. The players on each side tried to get the ball and throw it over the opponent's goal. Each goal counted one point. The side which scored one hundred points first would win the game.

Indians counted with their fingers. By opening and closing both hands, they meant ten. When they wanted to count to twelve, they raised two more fingers. For one hundred they opened and closed their hands ten times.

When keeping the score for a game, the Indians laid down a short stick for each ten points scored. Sometimes they had one long stick for

each side. Then, as a point was scored, they cut a notch in the stick belonging to the scoring side. The Indians would notch a stick for anything they wanted to count—days, animals, or wigwams. The Indians also had names for their numbers.

Two old men had been selected as judges. They threw the ball toward the starting point. The great game had begun! The players tripped and threw each other. They shouted, and they gave war whoops. When the ball fell to the ground, there was a great scramble to recover it and pass or carry it for a goal.

The women stood along both sides of the playing field, watching the game. Their braves and their sweethearts were playing. Each woman encouraged the side of her choice. The women were really more excited than the men. Each point won or lost gave them more joy or sorrow than it did the players.

In a different part of the field the boys ran races and played their own lacrosse game. Otter and Red Deer chose sides. They put up their own

goals. The boys played just as their fathers did, not even forgetting the war whoops. The dogs could not remember when they had ever heard such a noise before. They did not know what it meant; so they put their tails between their legs and ran off to hide.

The girls and their mothers left the playing field a little earlier than the men and the boys. They went back to the camp to make the food ready for the feast.

When the great lacrosse game was over and the winners had been proclaimed, Otter and Red Deer joined their fathers. Then everybody went back to the village.

In the center of the village a great council fire was burning. The Medicine Man and the councilmen gathered around the fire. They sat down as they did in a meeting.

The Medicine Man filled a pipe with the sacred tobacco. He took a hot coal out of the fire and lighted the pipe. Then he stood up. First he held the pipe toward the Great Mystery, then

toward the four winds, and finally toward Mother Earth. The Medicine Man and the Indians thanked Father Sun and Mother Earth for the good harvest and the time of plenty that was with them. They thanked the Rain People for staying away while the rice was being harvested. They thanked the White Spirits of the South for their great help.

The Medicine Man put the stem of the pipe to his lips. He blew out a mouthful of the fragrant smoke. Then he sat down. He took two or three more puffs of the smoke and passed the pipe to the Indian sitting at his right. That Indian took a few puffs and passed the pipe to his neighbor. It was passed on until all the councilmen of the village had, each in his turn, smoked the pipe.

The Medicine Man took a bit of the sacred tobacco and dropped it on the fire. Then he took a little corn, a handful of rice, and a piece of meat and dropped them on the hot coals. The smoke rose toward the home of the Great Mystery. Then the thanksgiving was over.

The feast was ready. Everybody sat down to eat. The children thought they had never seen so much food. There were great bucketfuls of rice and ducks boiled together. Ribs of deer and moose meat were broiling before the fire. The women and the girls had dug wild turnips and boiled them. The women had brought out maple sugar. They had gathered wild cherries. Some of the wild cherries, stones and all, had been pounded with dried moose meat. The Indians called this pemmican. Indians are very fond of pemmican. The women always make it for the feasts.

Everyone ate all he wanted. The children really ate too much. After the feast the boys and the girls were so tired that they were glad to go home and to bed.

The older people had a dance. They stayed up long after the sun went to bed. The night was dark, for the Moon of Falling Leaves was growing old; but the fire burned brightly. The flames leaped and played to the sound of the tom-tom

and the light tap-tap of the Indians' moccasined feet.

While the Indians were dancing, the chief called a council. The council met in the chief's wigwam. All the councilmen sat in a circle.

The chief filled his pipe. He lighted it and took a puff or two. He handed the pipe to his neighbor, and it was passed around the circle. When the pipe was returned to the chief, he laid it down beside him. Then he stood up. Everybody was attentive.

"I shall speak," said the chief. "The women have made much maple sugar. They have dried many pieces of moose meat. We have harvested a large crop of wild rice. Let us trade some of it with our neighbors of the plains. They have many buffalo robes. The buffalo robes will keep us warm when the cold moons are here.

"The Moon of Falling Leaves has grown old. The Moon of Dry Grass will be here soon. There are many sleeps during that moon. Let us visit our neighbors of the plains. We shall trade with



"Let us trade with our neighbors," said the chief.

them. We shall trade moose meat and maple sugar for buffalo robes. I have spoken!"

The chief sat down. The councilmen were pleased. They talked about such a trip. They knew that the buffalo did not live in the woodlands. They knew that the moose did not like the plains. They knew that the plains Indians liked rice, sugar, and dried moose meat. The councilmen decided that they would visit their neighbors. All those who wanted to trade would leave the village after two sleeps, when the Moon of Dry Grass rose.

The Indians did not call the dark part of their days "nights." They called their nights "sleeps." If a warrior was going on a trip that would keep him away from home for two or three days, he would say, "I will return in two or three sleeps."

The crier picked up his drum and left the chief's wigwam. The fire in the center of the village was burning low, but the people still talked and danced around it. They were waiting to hear news from the council.

“After two sleeps,” called the crier, “all the people who would like to trade for buffalo robes with our neighbors of the plains must be prepared to leave. We shall start before the sun tells us that the day has begun. We shall travel toward the home of the West Wind, where the plains Indians live. Pack the rice, dried moose meat, and maple sugar to trade for buffalo robes.”



A VISIT TO THE PLAINS INDIANS

I

Antelopes and Prairie Dogs

The next two days were busy ones in the Indian village. The women filled large skin bags with maple sugar, wild rice, and dried moose meat. They tied moose hides into bundles. The plains Indians would like to have the moose hides to make moccasins. On the second day everyone went to bed when the sun said good-night.

Early the next morning, before the night clouds had gone to their wigwams, scouts led the traders out of the village and into the woodlands. There was a long line of men, women, children, and dogs, each carrying a pack. The scouts went first. They would warn the people of any danger ahead. Then came the chief, the warriors, the women, the children, and the dogs.

The great pinea wished the red people a good

trip. The gentle breezes helped the pines wave their long arms in greeting. The pines knew these red people. They had given them pitch to spread over the seams in their canoes.

The Indians walked for a long time. Then the trail led them beside a beautiful lake. They stopped there to eat pemmican and to get a drink of water. The dogs were thirsty, too.

Beyond the lake the trail led up a steep hill. The children thought that the hill was trying to hide something from them. The boys especially were eager to see what was on the other side.

Part way up the hill the scouts raised their hands. That was a warning. The chief told the women to stop. He seemed alarmed. He and the warriors hurried to the scouts to find out what the warning meant.

The scouts had come upon the trail of another band of Indians. The men examined the tracks and found that the trail had not been left by a war party. They found the footprints of women and children. A war party would not have taken

women and children with them. The tracks were old. The other Indians must have passed several days before. There had been a shower since they had gone by, for the tracks had lost their sharp edges.

The chief made a sign to the women and children, and the whole company followed the trail of the other Indians.

Not very far away they came upon an abandoned camp. Bones and pieces of meat were scattered on the ground. Several wolves that had been feasting on the bones and meat stole off to hide in their wilderness homes.

A baby dog that had escaped the wolves came running out to meet the woods Indians, wagging his tail. He wanted to be friendly. Otter asked if he might keep the puppy. His father said that he might. Otter took the little dog in his arms and carried him over to show to his mother and Fox.

"Something must have frightened these people," said the chief. "They hurried away without



Wolves stole off to hide in the wilderness.

packing many of their things. Perhaps warriors on the warpath or a raiding party was discovered by their scouts."

One of the women found a parfleche on the ground. A parfleche is a rawhide trunk used by the Indians to carry their clothing. Some woman had forgotten it in her hurry to leave. It contained her buckskin clothing carefully packed.

When the red people of the woodlands had picked up all the things they found around this camp, the chief said, "We must travel on. The sun is not yet low."

The Indians picked up their bundles and started up the hill once more. The puppy did not have to be called. He followed Otter as if he was glad to have found a new master.

When the Indians reached the top of the hill, the boys saw what was on the other side. At the bottom, rushing along through the valley and around the base of the next hill, was a beautiful stream.

The Indians followed the trail that led down

the hill and toward the water. By the time they reached the stream, the women were tired. The chief signaled the scouts to stop.

"The sun has traveled far across the sky," he said. "We shall camp here for the night."

The Indians took off their packs. The boys unloaded the dogs. The women gathered wood for fires. The boys ran to the stream. They took their bone fishhooks and their fishlines. They wanted to catch some fish for the evening meal.

After they had eaten, even the men and the women were glad to go to bed with the children and the sun.

The boys and girls were not called the next morning until the early meal was ready. After eating, the boys helped pack the dogs, and the girls helped their mothers pack the food. Soon the little band was on the trail again.

They traveled through the woods until the sun was just over their heads. Then they came to open country. They could see for a long distance ahead. These Indians had never before

been able to see so far. They had not known that there could be such a great stretch of flat country. It seemed to have no end.

The people stopped to eat.

"It will be hard to find wood on the plains," said the chief. "We shall eat here. We shall reach our neighbors' before the sun goes to bed."

That afternoon the Indians traveled over the plains. Otter and Red Deer had never been on the plains before, and there were many interesting things for them to see.

"Look," said Otter's father. "There is a band of antelopes. Do you see that cloud of dust ahead? The antelopes have seen us and are running away."

The beautiful little plains animals that were running away are usually known as antelopes. They really should be called pronghorns, for that is their correct name.

"I understand now," said Red Deer, "why the antelope won the deer's gall bag. He is a swift runner."

Otter asked Red Deer what he meant.

“Do you not know the story, Otter? Big Moon told it to me,” replied Red Deer. “He said that many, many snows ago the antelope went to visit the deer. The deer’s home is in the forest. The antelope and the deer were playing together in the woods, and the deer challenged the antelope to a race.

“The antelope said, ‘You cannot beat me running. I will bet my dewclaws that I can win the race.’

“The deer was willing to bet. He had always won from his woodland brothers when they had a race, and he felt sure that he could beat the antelope.

“The antelope and the deer started to run. The deer, that had always lived in the forest, easily outran his brother of the plains. The antelope lost his dewclaws to the deer.

“Then the antelope invited the deer to visit him upon the plains, and the deer went to visit the antelope. After giving the deer some food, the antelope said, ‘Let us have a race here.’



A band of antelopes was running away.

"The deer was sure that he could outrun the antelope again. He thought his brother of the plains was foolish to challenge him.

" 'I will race with you,' said the deer. 'I will bet my gall bag that I can outrun you.'

"The antelope accepted the bet, and the two started to race. This time the antelope was at home. He outran the deer very easily. The deer was surprised, but he gave his gall bag to the antelope.

"And that is why the antelope has no dew-claws, and the deer has no gall bag."

Otter had never heard this story before. He thanked Red Deer for telling it to him. The two boys watched the antelopes until they could see only little specks far off in the distance. Then the boys wondered what else they would see in this strange country of great prairies. They did not think that they would like to live on the plains always. They loved the big trees, the lakes, the rivers, and the maple grove in their woodlands.

Out here on the prairies sagebrush grew on

both sides of the trail as far ahead as the Indians could see. Otter's puppy saw something hiding behind a bush. He ran toward it, barking, and a flock of prairie chickens took flight.

The Indians passed a prairie dog village. The prairie dog looks like a squirrel but is about twice as large. Prairie dogs live in underground burrows. Often hundreds of them live in the same village. They are always visiting one another. When they are alarmed, they sit up on their haunches and give a shrill little whistle. Then they dive down into their holes.

The prairie dogs have some very unwelcome visitors. The boys saw a rattlesnake crawl into one prairie dog hole. Prairie dogs are afraid of the rattlesnake. He comes into their homes uninvited; and if there are any baby prairie dogs, he swallows them.

Farther on Otter and Red Deer saw a jack rabbit. They knew the snow-shoe rabbit, but this fellow was a stranger to them. It was great fun to watch him leap over the prairie on his long

legs. The women and the children had to hold the dogs. Dogs like to chase rabbits.

Otter's puppy saw a jack rabbit and ran after him. The jack rabbit must have made up his mind to have a good time. He kept just a little ahead of the dog. Every few moments the jack rabbit took a great bound; then he looked back to see where the dog was, and ran on a little farther. After a while the rabbit became tired of the chase. He had had all the fun he wanted. He ran off, and the dog came back, very hot and tired. His tongue was hanging out. He was a very disgusted dog.

Just then the scouts signaled for the people to stop. Otter and Red Deer wondered why. They looked ahead and saw an Indian village.

II

Trading and Feasting

A group of men, women, and children had gathered outside the plains village to greet the visitors. An Indian brave left this group and walked alone toward the Indians from the woodlands.

The chief of the woods Indians told his people to wait, and walked ahead by himself. He walked toward the man who came from the village. Soon both men stopped, and each made a sign with his hands. The sign meant "friend." Then the two men met, and the visitors were invited to enter the village.

There were many houses in this village, but they were not like the ones in which Otter and Red Deer lived. Otter and Red Deer lived in wigwams made of birch bark. These neighbors of the plains lived in big skin tepees. They made their homes of buffalo hides.



A man from each tribe signaled "friend." 148813

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Each family of woods Indians was invited to be the guest at one of the tepees. Food was set before the visitors. While they were eating, the sun went to sleep. It seemed to Otter as if the sun dropped right off the edge of the prairie. He decided that the next evening he would watch and see where the sun lived out here on the plains. The children were so tired that they went to bed as soon as they had eaten.

The chief asked all the visiting men to meet in the council lodge. Then they could tell him why they had come.

When the men reached the lodge, the chief was seated at the back. He invited the visiting people to sit on either side of him. Neither tribe knew the other's language. They used their hands instead of words to express what they meant. They talked in the sign language.

The chief of the woods Indians said, "We have brought dried moose meat, rice, and maple sugar to trade for buffalo robes."

The chief of the plains Indians said that he

would tell his people. He told the visiting chief that his people had many buffalo robes.

"To-morrow we shall trade," said the chief of the plains Indians.

Then the meeting in the council lodge was over. A little later a crier came out of his tepee.

"We shall have a big camp fire to-night," he called. "We shall welcome our friends from the woodlands. We shall have a social dance."

The red people of the woodlands had brought along their best buckskin clothes carefully packed in parfleches. They changed their traveling clothes for their feast-day ones and went out to the camp fire.

The Indians sat in a big circle around the fire. Four men sat at one side with large drums. They began to pound the drums, and the women formed a smaller circle inside the big one. Then only men were left in the outside circle. The women sang and moved in a short side step around the fire and within the circle of men. When a woman saw the man with whom she wanted to dance, she

stepped out of the circle and took him for her partner. He had to give her a present. Soon every woman dancer had a partner, and the Indians danced merrily around the fire.

After the dance had been going on for a while, the women who did not dance brought out skin buckets of food. The men and women stopped dancing and the people ate. The seven little people in the sky, which we call the dipper, had traveled almost across the heavens by the time that the feast stopped and the people went to their tepees to rest.

Otter and Red Deer were up early the next morning. They had slept wrapped in buffalo robes. The robes were so soft and warm that the boys did not like to leave them, but they wanted to see how the sun got up. There were no hills for the sun to climb over out here on the plains.

Otter pushed the flap of his tepee aside and looked through the opening. The sagebrush growing all over the prairie looked very gray. There were no shadows. The sun had not yet

risen. The Indian women of the plains were helping the women from the woodlands bring in firewood. Wood did not lie all about on the plains as it did in the woods. The women had to carry it from the stream where the cottonwood trees lived.

The women prepared the early meal over small fires outside the tepees. As they worked, a crier walked through the village. He told the people that the visitors had come to trade. He said that they had brought dried moose meat, rice, and maple sugar to trade for buffalo robes and that they had brought moose hides for making moccasins. The woods Indians could not understand what the crier was saying, but they could tell that he was calling his people to trade.

Otter and Red Deer watched the eastern sky. Away down, almost resting on the plains, they saw the Cloud People. They hoped that the Cloud People were not bringing rain. They watched the gray clouds grow lighter. The sun was painting them a delicate purple and pink. The sun did that in the woodlands, too. Then



The women cooked outside the tepees.

the sun appeared. The boys wondered if he lived on the plains. He seemed to come up in a space between the plains and the sky.

“Do you think,” asked Red Deer, “that he just drops over the edge of the prairie when he goes to rest?”

Before the woods Indians had finished their morning meals, they saw their neighbors of the plains carry robes to the council lodge. The woods Indians picked up the moose hides and bags of food that they had brought to trade, and followed their neighbors of the plains.

The chiefs of both tribes stood together within the council lodge. One of the plains warriors handed his chief a robe. The chief laid the robe on the ground. One of the woodlands warriors placed what he had to trade beside his chief. His chief took dried moose meat, rice, and maple sugar from the bags and placed a pile of each beside the robe. If the other chief thought the trade fair, he made the sign “good.” If he did not think the trade fair, he made the sign “not enough.”

Then the woods chief added a little more to each pile. When both were satisfied, the exchange was made; and another warrior brought a robe. Another exchange was made. This time a moose hide was exchanged for a buffalo robe. The Indians did not hurry. They could trade all day.

The children grew tired of watching the trading and ran off to play. They could not understand the language of each other, but that made no difference. They could play anyway. The plains children liked the buffalo game. The woods children did not know that game, for no buffalo lived in their woodlands. The plains children taught the woods children how to play that game.

First the plains boys were the hunters, and the woods boys were the buffaloes. The buffaloes tried to keep away from the hunters. The hunters tried to hit the buffaloes with their blunt arrows. Each hunter had three arrows. If he dropped one, he could not pick it up. When a hunter had shot his three arrows, he was out of the game.



A woods Indian traded for a buffalo robe.

Each buffalo watched the hunters closely. How he would dodge and stoop when an arrow was aimed at him! If the arrow hit him, he was out of the game.

All the buffaloes had been hit before the plains boys had used all their arrows. They won the game that time.

The next time the woods boys were the hunters. They knew how to play the game now, and they also knew how to use their bows. The plains boys did not have to teach them that. The woods boys held a little council. They decided that they must be very careful. They must win this game.

The buffaloes took their places. The hunters took their places. The signal to start was given.

The woods boys held their arrows very tightly. They did not want to drop even one. The hunters did not shoot until they were close to the buffaloes. Neither Otter nor Red Deer shot first. They watched their hunter friends. One of the boys shot his first arrow. It did not hit its mark.

That would never do! Otter shot the next arrow. A buffalo fell to the ground. The hunter boys took careful aim. Although every arrow did not hit its mark, all the buffaloes were down before all the arrows had been used. The woods boys had won the game and had proved that they could shoot just as well as the plains boys.

The sun had traveled more than halfway across the sky. The boys went back to the village.

Some of the boys who lived on the plains had buffalo-calf robes of their own. They brought them out and showed them to the boys from the woodlands. The plains boys were very proud of their robes. Otter and Red Deer wanted robes of their own, too. They went to the council lodge and gave the sugar they had brought along to their chief. The plains chief laid two buffalo-calf robes on the ground. The boys told their chief that they would like those robes, and the trade was made.

Otter and Red Deer wrapped the robes about themselves and felt like big warriors. They were

happy. They would not need their bearskins any longer. Otter gave his bearskin to Fox. Fox was not big enough to use a buffalo robe.

The shadows were getting longer. The trading was over. The women gathered wood for the evening fires. A crier came out of his tepee. He was beating his drum. Everybody stopped work to listen. He invited all the visitors to a feast.

The women carried their wood to the center of the village. They built a big fire. The plains women brought out buffalo and antelope meat to roast. The woodland people brought out a large birch-bark box filled with maple sugar. The plains Indians liked maple sugar. The children were hungry. To them the roasting meat smelled very good.

When all the food was ready, the Indians sat around the fire. The Medicine Man made a prayer to thank the Great Mystery for the food. Everybody ate all he wanted.

Then the chief of the plains Indians stood up. He invited the woods Indians to stay for another

sleep and take part in contests on the next day. The chief sat down.

The chief of the woods Indians stood up. He asked his people if they wanted to stay. The men looked at the moon. It was no longer young. The Moon of First Snow would be with them soon. The men talked it over and decided to stay anyway. Their chief made the sign:

“We will stay one more sleep. We have had a good time. We invite all of you to visit us at our home.”

The plains chief thanked the woods chief for his invitation.

The feast was over, and the Indians went to their tepees. Otter and Red Deer slept in their new robes that night.

III

A Day of Contests

Otter's mother and father spent the next morning packing their things. They could not wait until afternoon to get ready to go home, for that was when the contests would be held. There would not be time to pack after the games, and the woods Indians planned to start for home early the following day before the sun came out of his prairie lodge.

Fox was tied to his baby board. The mother leaned the board against the side of the tepee. Otter was sorry for Fox. He did not think that Fox could be having a good time. But Fox was happy. He liked his baby board, and he watched the little children play near the tepee. The little girls played with their buckskin dolls. Sometimes the girls played with the real babies. They liked to play with Fox; he laughed so merrily.

That was his baby way of saying, "I am happy. I like to play with you."

When the sun was on his way to his western lodge, the Indians gathered on the playing field.

The first contest between the Indians was a foot race. The warriors selected a starting place. Then one of them paced about two hundred steps. That was where the finishing line would be. The chief of the woods Indians stood at one end of the race track, and the chief of the plains Indians stood at the other. The men who were going to race took off their buckskin shirts and their leggings.

The plains chief selected three runners from each tribe. They went to the starting line. The chief raised his hand. When the men were ready, he dropped his hand and shouted, "Go!"

The men ran very swiftly. It seemed as if their feet scarcely touched the ground. The woodland chief was waiting for them at the finishing line. He selected the best runner from each side and signaled the plains chief. Six more

runners were chosen, and they raced. After all the men had run, the winners were matched against each other. This time the woods chief started the runners, and the plains chief picked the winners. At last all the men but two had been defeated. They were to run the final race.

The plains chief gave the signal for the deciding race to start. The two runners sped across the field. Neither could gain on the other. The woods chief, who was to determine the winner, watched very carefully. The race was so close that it was difficult for him to tell who crossed the finishing line first. After a moment's thought he said that the plains Indian had won.

The prize was a bow. When it was time for the plains chief to present it, he had two bows. He held up his right hand. That meant "Listen!"

"The race has been run," the plains chief said. "My people say it was very close. The warriors say that both runners were together. The watchers could not tell who came in first. The chief of the people from the woodlands could not



The woods chief picked the winner of the race.

decide who won. He gave the race to our warrior. There was no winner. Both men won the prize. We shall give a bow to both warriors."

The chief presented each winner with a beautiful bow. Both tribes were pleased.

Otter said, "I am glad the woodland people can run on the plains. Animal people must be different. The deer and the antelope could run only in their own homes."

The men were eager to have another contest. They wanted to shoot the flight-arrow. That game was easy. The men took out their bows and arrows. One Indian shot an arrow as far as he could. Another tried to shoot farther. Afterwards some of the men wrestled. The boys played the ring game.

The shadows grew long. Soon the sun would go to rest, and the red people of the woodlands would go with him. He would have to follow them when he arose in the morning, for by that time the Indians would be walking over the plains toward their homes in the woodlands.

IV

Back to the Woodlands

In the gray dawn of early morning, the plains women gave presents and food to the red people of the woodlands. The children brought gifts for their new friends, too. One little plains boy gave Otter an arrowhead that he had made. The children liked each other, and Otter and Red Deer invited their new friends to visit them in their woodland homes.

A few plains warriors started on the trail with the travelers. The chief of the plains people walked with the chief of the woodland people. When the sun came out of his tepee, the plains Indians said good-by and returned to their village. The red people of the woodlands were alone once more.

The chief called his party together. He sent the scouts ahead. After a little while the warriors started. Last came the women and the children



The plains Indians watched their visitors depart.

and the dogs. The women and the children talked as they walked along. The dogs gave happy yelps. They knew they were on the way home.

Just ahead the boys saw a group of the men looking at a large, round, basin-shaped hole. Otter and Red Deer left the women and ran up to find out why the men were looking at it.

"What is that?" asked Otter.

One of the warriors answered him. "That is a buffalo wallow. Look ahead and see the wide trails leading over the prairie. Those trails were made by big herds of buffaloes as they came this way.

"When buffaloes travel during the warm moons, they are bothered by swarms of flies. To rid themselves of these enemies, the buffaloes lie down and roll in the dirt. That makes these wallows. When it rains, water collects in them. Buffaloes like to roll in wet dirt. It sticks in their hair, and the flies cannot bite through it. Dry dirt gets into their hair, too. The buffaloes carry the dirt and mud away with them.

"The Wind People also play in these holes, and they help carry away the dirt. That is how the holes become deeper and deeper."

The warrior pointed to the grass near by.

"See," he said, "the grass has been eaten very close to the ground. It has not yet had time to grow again. Buffaloes must have passed here only a short time ago."

The warrior and the boys walked around the wallow. A short distance away they saw a great many bones. They went over to see what kind of bones they might be. The warrior told the boys that the bones were from buffaloes. Many skulls were lying about on the ground. Otter and Red Deer found leg and rib bones, too.

"There must have been a buffalo hunt here," said the warrior. "I shall pick out the largest skull. We must carry it back to the woodlands with us and give it to the Medicine Man."

The warrior picked up the largest skull he could find, and carried it back to the trail. He fastened the skull to his pack and placed the pack

on his back. The other people picked up their packs, too.

The little band of Indians started on. The sharp eyes of the children watched the prairies. They hoped to see more of the strange animal people that lived there.

Soon the Indians came to the prairie dog villages again. A very small owl with very long legs was sitting at the edge of one of the prairie dog holes. Otter and Red Deer walked toward it, expecting to see it fly. They were surprised. Instead of flying, the owl dived into the prairie dog hole. A warrior told them that these owls lived in the prairie dog holes. Otter and Red Deer thought that was very queer. In their woodlands the owls lived in trees.

The sun was almost overhead. The children had stopped talking. The dogs were quiet. The Indians had walked for a long time, and they were getting hungry. In the distance the children could see a few trees. The Indian chief said that they would stop to eat when they reached

the trees. The children tried to hurry. They wished the women could run. The boys and girls wanted to eat.

At the edge of the woodlands the chief raised his hand. The women and the children stopped. The scouts came back.

"We shall stop here," said the chief. "We shall eat and rest."

The women took from their packs the food that the plains women had given them. Everybody sat down and ate. When the meal was over, the women and the children packed what was left. Then they rested.

The chief pointed toward a bunch of sagebrush. The children saw a movement. Then their keen eyes discovered a little fox. Soon they saw another. The boys thought that the kit foxes were playing.

"They are catching field mice," said a warrior.

The foxes heard the Indians and ran off as fast as they could go. Otter and Red Deer saw the two little fellows dive into their hole.



Two kit foxes were catching field mice.

The chief said that the Indians had rested long enough. "We must go on," he said. "We must camp near water to-night."

The scouts went ahead, and the warriors and the women followed. The trail led through the woodlands now. The children felt as if they were almost at home. The plains had been strange. The boys and girls liked their woodlands better. They liked the trees and the birds and the little animal people.

The Indians followed the trail and watched the shadows turn toward the east. Before long Father Sun would paint the western sky and go to his rest. The Indians had walked all day, and the women and children were getting tired. They hoped that they might soon camp and rest.

The chief, who was walking ahead with the warriors, held up his hand. Everybody stopped. The children caught hold of the dogs. The dogs did not mind stopping. They lay down to rest. The children were impatient. They knew that they would not eat again until they made camp.

The women and children waited for orders from their chief. At first they stood in little groups and talked very softly. After a while they sat down to rest. They wondered why their chief did not give them the signal either to come on or to make camp.

Far ahead the leader of the scouts had signaled the warriors to stop. The chief had signaled the women and children. Then the chief and his warriors waited for the scouts to report. The scouts told their chief that they had heard the bugle of a bull elk. A band of elks were feeding not far off. The wind was blowing toward the Indians. That was why the elks had not been warned of danger.

Four hunters started for the feeding ground of the elks. The men crept through the woods very quietly. They had to go slowly, for the ground was covered with dry leaves.

The warriors watched the hunters disappear. The brush and the trees hid them. Then the Indians waited for a long time.

Suddenly the silence was broken by a crashing noise. The band of elks was rushing through the brush and the leaves, away from danger. The Indians who were waiting became excited. They wondered if the elks had heard the hunters coming. Perhaps one of the hunters had stepped on a twig hidden under the leaves. The noise sounded farther and farther away. At last the forest grew silent again.

Soon the warriors heard the gentle rustle of dry leaves. The hunters were returning. There was no need for them to walk noiselessly now. The woodland people had already been warned by the running elks.

"We shall have fresh meat," said the leader of the hunters to the chief.

The chief signaled the women and the children to join the men. When they arrived, he chose a few women to go with him; and the hunters led them to a beautiful bull elk. He was wearing a great crown of horns.

The Indians prepared the horns to carry home.

From them they would make many things, such as knife handles and skin scrapers. The women saved the eyeteeth of the elk to decorate dresses or make into a necklace. Then the women skinned the animal. After they reached home, they would tan the skin and make it into shirts, leggings, dresses, moccasins, or a robe.

The women who remained behind made the camp. The girls gathered a large pile of wood, for they knew there would be meat to roast. It was easier to find wood in the woodlands than it had been on the plains.

The fire was burning and there was a great bed of red coals when the women brought in the ribs of the elk. They set these before the fire. Soon the children were sniffing the air. It smelled good. While the meat was roasting, the men carried in the elk horns, the skin, and the rest of the meat.

Then everybody ate. The dogs ate, too. The Indians gave them bones. The dogs liked to gnaw the bones. The boys ate so much that it made

them sleepy. They tried to sit near the fire, afterwards, and listen to the story of the hunt, but they were asleep before the hunters started to talk.

The women saved the food that was left for the morning meal. The little girls were not asked to help. They were so tired that they could scarcely talk. When they had finished eating, they had taken their buckskin dolls and had lain down on the ground.

The men told all about the hunt. Then everybody lay down to rest. The fire burned low. Soon the Indians, the dogs, and the fire slept.

Ducks and geese had begun to gather, and great numbers of wild fowl were on their way south. All through the night the Indians could hear the whirring sound of their wings. They heard the bell-like call of the wild goose as it honked on its way to southern feeding grounds. The moons of plenty would soon be gone, but the cold moons would not be moons of hunger for the Indians this time. The Great Mystery had been good to these red people.



The men told all about the hunt.

The next morning the sun caught the Indians asleep. He sent his laughing rays to awaken them. How the Indians did hurry! They should already have been on the way toward their mid-day rest. The Indians ate what remained of their evening meal. Then they hurriedly packed their things. When the chief gave the signal to start, everybody was ready.

Wild pigeons that had been feeding on acorns and wild rice were passing over the woods in great flocks. They almost made a cloud in the sky, there were so many of them. The Indians passed places where the pigeons had roosted. Many limbs were on the ground. So many pigeons had tried to rest in the trees that their weight had broken off the limbs.

From away up in the clouds, almost out of sight, came a faint throbbing sound. Everybody looked up. The sun was glistening on the white bodies of whooping cranes. They made great circles as they gradually worked their way south.

The sun was overhead. The chief signaled

everybody to stop. The people had gone a long way, and everybody was hungry. The little girls brought in wood, and the women built a fire. The women roasted a large piece of meat before the fire. All the Indians ate, and what was left the women packed to take along.

“We are not far from home,” said the chief. Then he pointed a little more than halfway across the western sky and added, “We shall reach home before the sun is there.”

All were ready to go as soon as the dogs had finished gnawing their bones.

“When we reach the top of the hill,” said the chief, “we shall signal our people. We shall let them know that we are almost home.”

The Indians did not see many of the little animal people who lived in the woods. Leaves were thick upon the ground, and there were many travelers. The dogs and the children rattled the leaves, and the woodland people ran to hide long before the red people could see them.

The children were happy. They forgot what

the warriors had taught them about being quiet. They talked loudly. They ran ahead and then came back again. They forgot about the dogs. The women took care of them. The warriors did not warn the children; they, too, were glad that they would soon be home.

The trail to the top of the big hill did not seem long. When they reached the top, the chief and his people gathered a pile of wood. One of the women handed her buffalo fire-horn to the chief. Fire was asleep in the horn. The chief removed a layer of dry wood from the top of the horn. Underneath, live coals were lying on their bed of punk. The chief took the coals out carefully and put some dry grass upon them. He blew on them until the grass caught fire. As soon as he had a big fire, he put wet grass on top of it to make clouds of smoke.

The chief held a robe over the smoke. Holding a corner of the robe, he pulled it back far enough to let a great puff of smoke rise toward the heavens. He did this a number of times. He



The Indian chief sent a smoke signal.

was talking to the village, telling the people that he was almost home and that the traders had been successful on their trip. Then the woman took a few hot coals out of the fire. She laid them on their bed of punk in the fire-horn and covered them with rotten wood. Her fire was asleep once more.

The scouts started ahead. The women and the children put out the fire. The grass was dry, and many leaves were on the ground. If the fire should eat its way into the woodlands, it would burn the trees and drive away the animal people. The women and children started down the hill.

"Somewhere along here is where we found the tracks of the other Indian people when we were on our way to the plains village," said Red Deer. "Let us watch as we go along."

The boys watched the ground.

"Here they are," said Otter.

The two boys stopped to look at the tracks. Only faint traces of the footprints remained, for the wild animal people had almost wiped them

away. Soon no sign of those tracks would be left. Otter saw the tracks his people had made on their way to the plains. Those footprints were still fresh. They were only five sleeps old.

"Otter, we have been gone only five sleeps," said Red Deer. "To-night we shall sleep in our own wigwams."

"I feel as if we had been gone for a long, long time," said Otter. "We have seen so many things. We have much to tell about."

"We each have a buffalo robe, too," said Red Deer. "We shall play that we are warriors. Are you not happy, Otter, that we shall not wear our bearskin robes any more?"

"I cannot wear mine any more," said Otter. "I gave my bearskin robe to Fox."

Just then they came to a clearing. Far off in the distance they could see their wigwams. They would not have noticed the wigwams if they had not known where to look. The little birch-bark houses looked just like the trees that stood around as if to protect them. The boys

could see smoke. Their friends had built a fire to welcome them.

The Indians reached the bottom of the hill and started to follow the trail that led into their village. Otter and Red Deer stepped off the trail so that they would not be in the way, opened their packs, and took out their wonderful buffalo robes. Then they quickly tied their packs and put them on their backs again. They carried their buffalo robes proudly over their arms.

The boys ran ahead of the women. They thought the women walked very slowly. They wondered if the women were sorry to get home. The boys felt like running. They would have run, too, but they had to stay behind the scouts and the warriors.

A group of Indians came out of the village and walked toward the travelers. They had come out to welcome their people home. Otter and Red Deer could hardly wait to tell their friends about their buffalo robes.

The warriors must have known the children

were impatient. Perhaps they remembered how they had felt when they were little boys. The chief turned and motioned to the children to come to him. The children did not need a second invitation.

“Boys, do you want to run ahead to meet your friends?” asked the chief.

The children said they hoped the chief would let them do that.

“Good,” said the chief. “You may go.”

Off the boys ran, and Otter and Red Deer wrapped their robes about them as they went. They wanted to surprise the boys who had stayed at home.

Everybody was glad to welcome Otter and Red Deer. The little boys felt of the buffalo robes. Then they tried them on. While the little boys were admiring the robes, the rest of the party came up. More greetings were exchanged, and everybody stopped to talk. The travelers were glad to get home, and their people were happy to welcome them back again.

When the Indians arrived at the village, the sun had almost reached his western home. Otter and Red Deer watched him travel toward the hill where they knew he had his wigwam. They told their little friends how he had dropped off the prairie where the plains Indians lived. They told them that the sun had a tepee for his home where they had been visiting.

The women unpacked the elk meat and set it before the fire to roast. They knew the friends who had stayed at home would like it. The boys took the packs off the dogs, and everybody sat down to eat. Otter and Red Deer folded their robes and sat on them. The boys were sitting near the fire, and they did not want a spark or a flame to reach out and touch their wonderful robes.

The sun had closed his red eyes. The Cloud People had taken off the beautiful colors they had worn to welcome Father Sun to his wigwam. The children went into their wigwams. They were tired. The women cleared away the feast. The

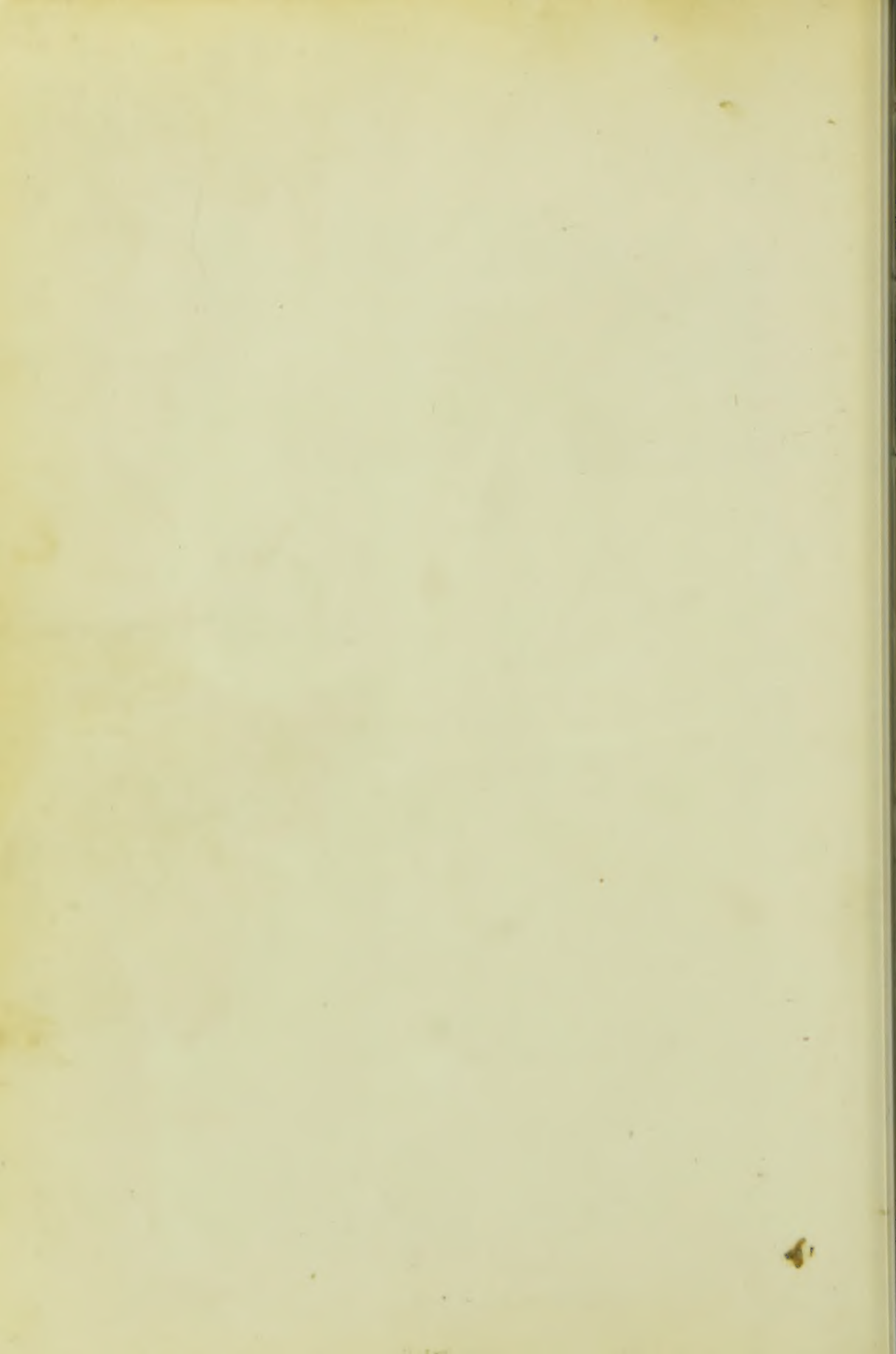
men passed the pipe, and the travelers told of their visit with the neighbors on the plains.

The fire grew tired. It became too tired to send out its warm tongues of flame. Its red coals glowed, then turned gray and went to sleep. The Indians stood up, pulled their robes about themselves, and went to their wigwams.

All the people were back, and the village was happy. It slept with its people.









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